

Meditation

By Jean Kirkpatrick, Ph.D., WFS Founder

To meditate is to reflect, to think, to ponder. Dorothy Canfield Fisher once wrote, *“We need to meditate, for meditation brings that calm continuity of spiritual and mental effort without which few can have the heart-satisfying sense of understanding.”*

Meditation is a way in which we can glimpse that glory of life... our life.

Meditation is part of the recovery process used in the WFS “New Life” Program. It is, in fact, an integral part of the program because it provides that part of our recovery that helps us to center ourselves and our place in the scheme of things.

Too often our lives are merely centered on our family and our jobs. We do not take the time to see ourselves in relation to the larger fabric of life. Too often we do not make time to reflect, to think, to ponder.

To practice the “New Life” Program to its fullest extent is to take a part of each day for meditation, for a time to think, for a time to reflect. The time of day selected can be different for each of us, but, for me, the very best time (and the time I most urge members to use) is the first segment of each day... that time of day before anyone else arises, so that each is entirely alone with her thoughts, her reflections, her meditations.

The meditative period should be that period in which each sees herself and her values; it should be that period of time when we are thankful for our sobriety, for our new life, for our ability to think straight, for our family and friends. It can be a period of spiritual reflection and it can be a period of quiet time for thought. It can be a period of time to make affirmations to oneself about what one wishes to achieve.

Meditation is very effective when one sits close to a window so that the outer world of nature can be observed. This provides a means for reflection, for it helps us to realize that there is a much larger but much less complicated, more normal life out there, a life not riddled with arguments, fights about money, worries about mundane things. It is a world of order and harmony. There is the dependability of the moon rising and the sun setting.

Seeing the natural world... looking at a tree... helps us to drop the worries and the tension. It changes our focus. It allows us to know that life is greater than arguments and sticky relationships.

We are a part of a greater whole. We are an important part of that living, natural world.

A twenty-minute period of meditation helps us to ponder ourselves. It helps us to think about ourselves and helps us to feel good about ourselves. (At least, that’s what it’s SUPPOSED to do!) It helps us to be centered. For those using the WFS “New Life” Program, it gives us a time to read the Program Statements each day and to reflect on

them and their meaning for us. It gives us a time to select one Statement that we will use all that day.

There are many forms of meditation. Perhaps the form that became the most popular is transcendental meditation. This form means to transcend, to go beyond. Usually one assumes a certain position and makes use of a 'mantra'.

Some persons use a form of meditation that is more like relaxation, lying on the floor in a relaxed position, listening to soft music.

The form of meditation suggested by WFS is the form in which we reflect, we ponder, we think, we relate, we center on ourselves and where we are going and what our relationship is to the world around us.

There is no one form of meditation that is right or wrong. To meditate, whatever form one uses, is to grow. It is the time in which we see ourselves in relation to eternity.

(This article is from *The Collection of Sobering Thoughts Booklet*, Volume 11 and copyrighted by Women for Sobriety, Inc., PO Box 618, Quakertown, PA 18951.)

Comments from Cindy:

In much of her writing, Jean places great emphasis on morning meditation time. In early sobriety, I have heard many women say, "I can't meditate" or "I don't know how to meditate." And I'd like to address those of you who might be saying the same thing...

Meditation doesn't just happen; it's not a skill that we are born with. It is a habit, something that we need to practice and start out slowly with. The key word is **START**. Because I personally found it difficult to commit myself to meditating 20 to 30 minutes every morning I decided that I would start off with only 5 to 10 minutes. After all, even marathon runners start training with shorter distances. I began by finding a quiet place and time and settled down with the WFS Program Booklet. Each day I would read a section on one of the 13 Statements. Then I would close the book and think about the statement and what it meant to ME and how I would start using that statement in my daily life. Of course I had my favorite statements that I would go back to time and time again (Statements #4 and #13) but I made sure that I would meditate on all of them, not avoiding any even if I thought they were difficult. Eventually, I found it easier to extend my morning routine to 15 and then 20 minutes.

Today, I meditate not only in the morning, but at night when I go to bed too. My two favorite times have become when I get up and look forward to every day and when I go to bed at night, grateful that I have had another day of my new life. Are YOU meditating every day? Here are a few guidelines* to get you started:

- ♦ Put your expectations aside, and don't worry about doing it right. There are, however, a few things to avoid. They are...
 - ~Trying to force something to happen.
 - ~Over-analyzing the meditation.
 - ~Trying to make your mind blank or chase thoughts away.
 - ~Putting too much emphasis on doing it right.

- ♦ Find a quiet, comfortable place to meditate. You can sit in a comfortable chair, on the bed, on the floor... anywhere that's comfortable. It's not necessary to sit cross-legged. Your legs and hands

can be in any position that is comfortable. Eliminate as much noise and as many potential distractions as possible. Don't worry about those things that you cannot control.

- ◆ Relax and focus on an object, a word or a thought, a color or symbol, or just your breathing. When your mind drifts off gently bring it back to your focus, no matter how many times this occurs.

* Guidelines reprinted in abridged format with permission from Jim Malloy's Worldwide Online Meditation Center (www.meditationcenter.com).