

QUIET YOUR MIND

I was a little apprehensive when I walked into the studio at St. Petersburg Yoga. This was to be my first meditation class, and I had no idea what to expect. It wasn't long, however, before I noticed the sense of calm in the room, and began to relax. With the help of Jennifer Pierson, instructor, I was soon learning to focus on my breathing and beginning to push away all other thoughts.

"Meditation is a concentration practice," says Julie Heppe, manager of St. Petersburg Yoga. "It teaches us to be present in the moment." Julie refers to how fast paced our lives typically are, and how much external stimuli distracts us. She says, "We should be able to sit in a room anywhere and meditate without letting those distractions affect us."

That sums up what meditation is all about: keeping your attention pleasantly focused on the present moment. No analyzing the past. No worries of the future. It is something that takes practice, but according to those who do it on a regular basis, there are numerous benefits. It can improve your memory, stimulate creativity, decrease anxiety and help you to become more aware and observant. Some say that regular meditation can even lower your blood pressure.

Kim Kyriazis, of Treasure Island, has been practicing the art of meditation for several years. "I started meditating for anxiety and depression," she says. "Now I continue it for the stress relief. It tends to keep me from tensing up during stressful times and also helps me find the quietness that I seem to need most of the time to remain centered and calm."

After only one class, I would recommend this to everyone. There is simply no way to describe the tranquil atmosphere and the sound of the "crystal singing bowls". You must experience it for yourself. Couldn't each of us benefit from the ability to relax, focus on breathing, and push away thoughts of all the things we have to accomplish in a day?

St. Petersburg Yoga is located at 275 16th Street North, St. Petersburg. Yoga meditation class is held on Sunday mornings at 8:15. Check out their website at stpetersburgyoga.com or call 727-894-YOGA for schedule and more information.