



meditation
Silence

Positive Meditation

Dr. Rosalyn M. King

Exploratorium on Positive Psychology

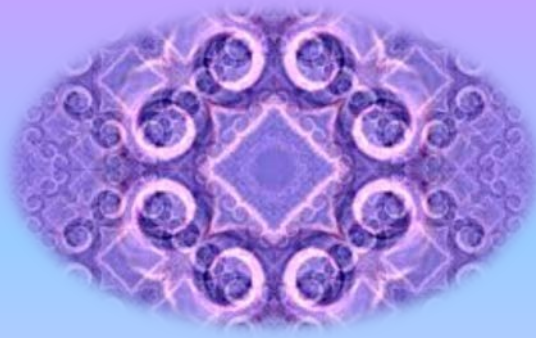
What is Meditation?

Meditation focuses on a family of techniques which have in common a conscious attempt to focus attention in a non-analytical way and an attempt not to dwell on recursive ruminating thought (Shapiro, 1980,p.14)



Three Important Components

- Conscious—intention to focus attention.
- Independent of Religious Framework or Orientation.
- Emphasis on the process as opposed to the goal or end results.



Two Traditional Categories

- **Concentrative**

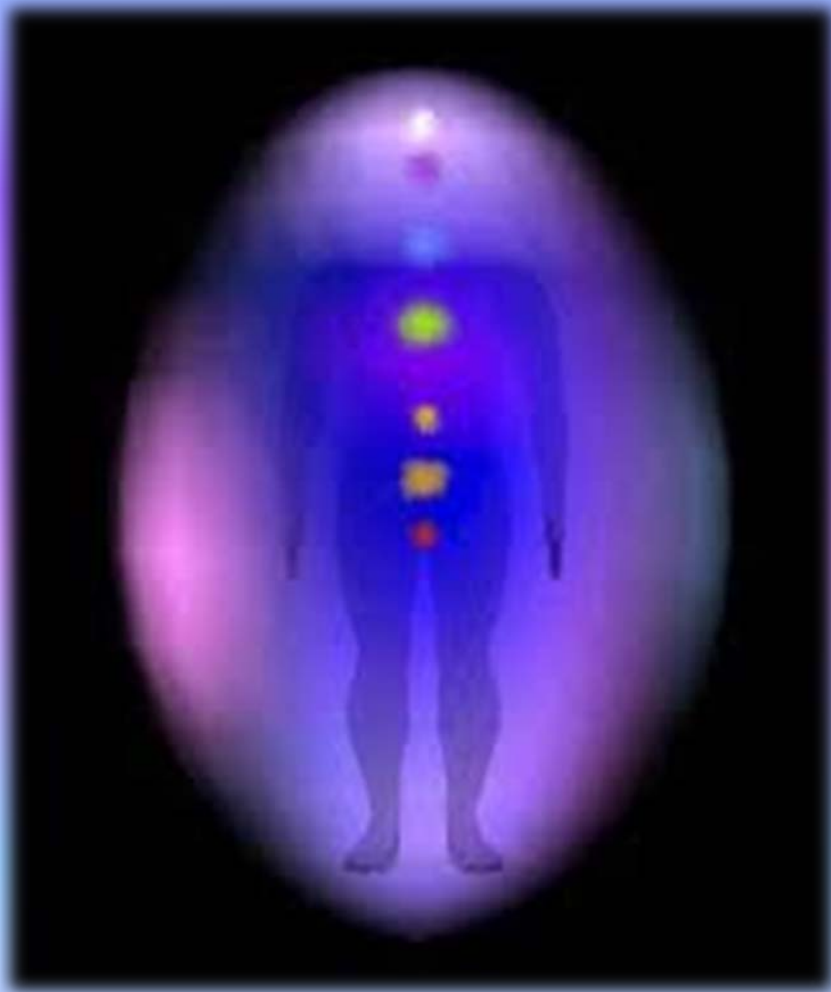
There is an attempt to restrict awareness by focusing on one object, thought, breath or mantra. The practitioner attempts to ignore other stimuli in the environment. You are focused in a non-analytical, non-emotional way.

- **Mindfulness**

An attempt to attend, non judgmentally, on internal and external environment, but not to get caught up into any particular stimulus. Often referred to as an “opening up” meditation practice.

Some meditative practices integrate both types.

Aim Of Meditation



- Development of greater understanding through systematic inquiry and insight.
- To cultivate a “way of being” that should be enhanced daily.
- Provides a roadmap to help recognize and let go of old structures and evolve toward new ways of seeing and being as we experience deep insights into the nature of mind and the path toward optimal health and freedom from suffering.

Findings from Research



Psychological and Physiological Effects



- Cardiovascular Disease
- Chronic Pain
- Anxiety and Panic Disorder
- Substance Abuse
- Dermatological Disorders
- Prevention of Relapse of Major Depressive Disorder
- Greater Increase in Influenza antibodies
- Effects on raising immune levels in cancer patients
- Relaxation and physiological rest
- Decline in blood cortisol and lactates and more stable phasic skin resistance

Psychological and Physiological Effects



- Brain regions associated with attention, interoception, and sensory processes were found to be thicker in meditation participants—contributing to the physiological structures that support intelligence.
- Repeated practice reverses the effects of chronic stress.

Positive Psychological Findings

Chakra Meditation



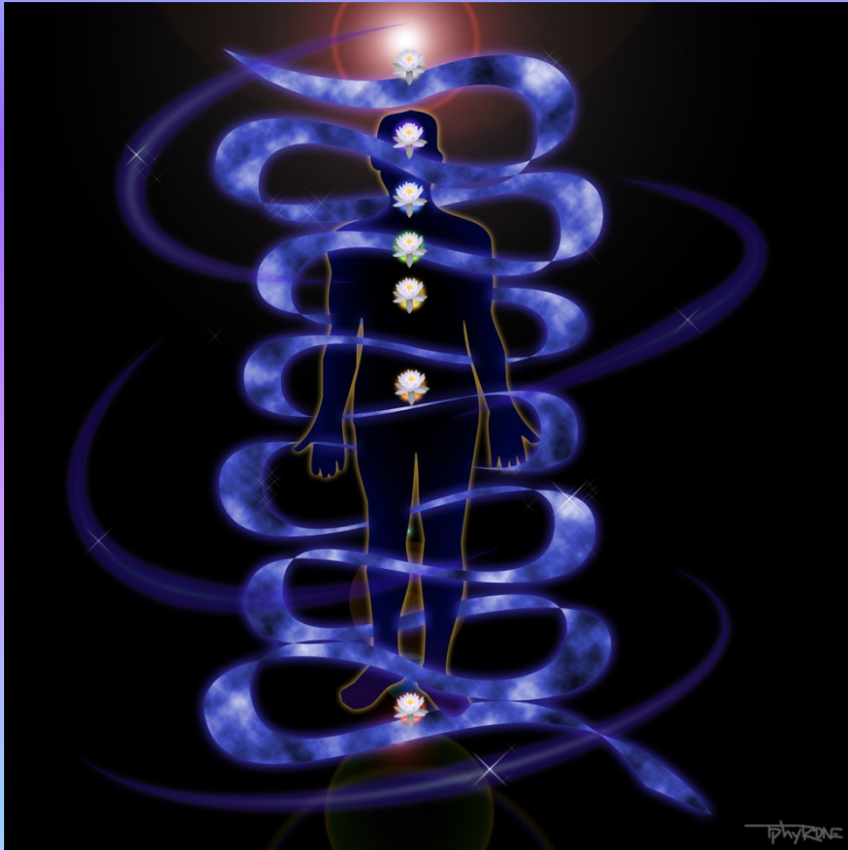
- **Memory and Intelligence:** Results in improvements in intelligence, school grades, learning ability and short and long-term recall.
- **Meditation can cultivate creativity.**
- **Long-term meditators** demonstrate greater attention processes than short-term meditators.
- **Improves relationship and partner satisfaction.**
- **Frequent meditators** report higher levels of positive affect, fewer stressors and illness symptoms, lower levels of anxiety, hostility, depression and dysphoria.

Positive Psychological Findings

- Reductions in alcohol, marijuana and crack cocaine use, as well as alcohol related problems and psychiatric symptoms.
- Self-compassion—being kind and understanding toward one self and others and being less critical.
- Leads to greater levels of empathy.



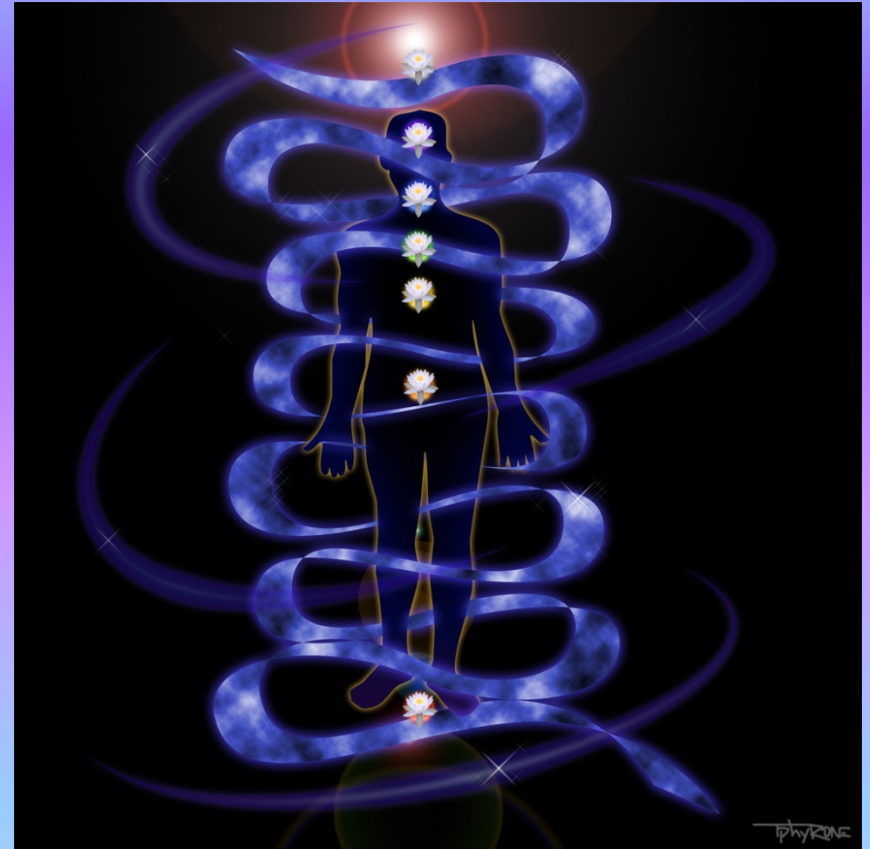
Positive Psychological Findings



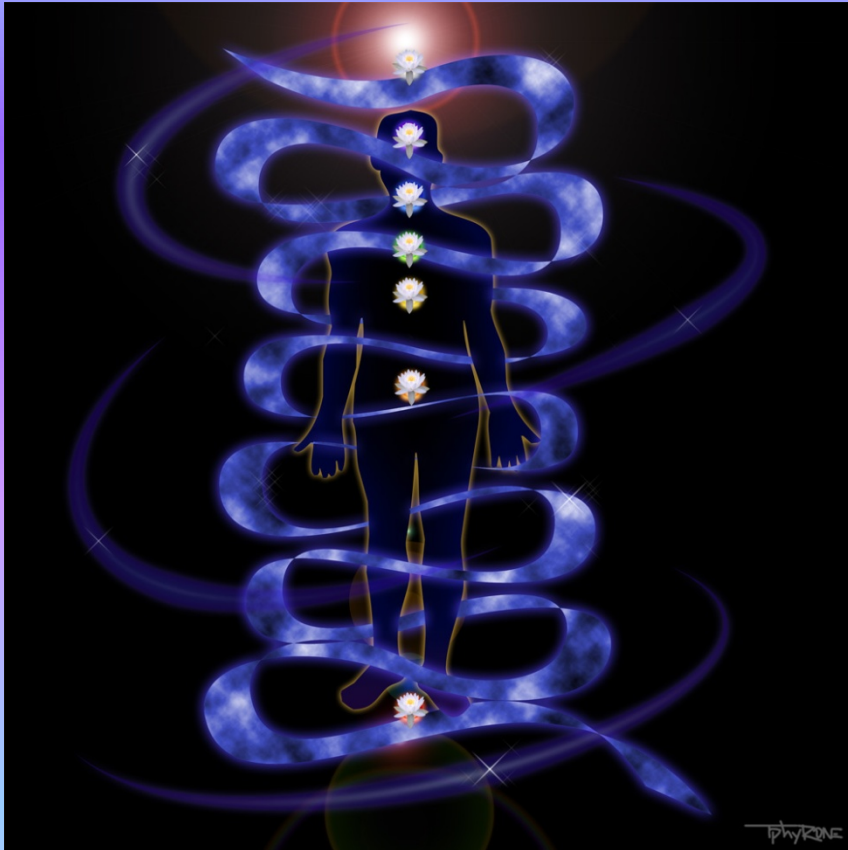
- Contributes to self actualization—actualize and integrate the personality of human kind to those fulfilled states of personal integration. (Ferguson, 1981, p.68).
- Includes increased acceptance of self, of others and of nature.

Positive Psychological Findings

- Enhances ethical motivation, including sensitizing awareness to the costs of unethical acts (such as guilt in oneself and pain produced in others), reducing problematic motives and emotions (such as greed and anger), strengthening morality supporting emotions (such as love and compassion), cultivating altruism and identification with others via transpersonal experience (Walsh, 1999).



Positive Psychological Findings



- Increased spirituality.
- Enhances physiological, psychological and transpersonal well-being.
- Specific enhancements include: physiological rest, happiness, acceptance, sense of coherence, stress hardiness, empathy and self-actualization.
- Helps with the actualization of personal and potential strengths.

Selected Videos

On the Power of Positive Meditation

- **2012-The Year of Power**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJJ_AM5C4ns&feature=youtu.be

- **2012: A Message of Hope**

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_YOG3jMIV4&feature=player_embedded#!

References

- Shapiro, Shauna L. (2009). Meditation and positive psychology. In Shane J. Lopez and C.R. Snyder (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 601-610.