

Heart Based Meditation: Panacea for Today's Youth

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Abstract

Restlessness alloyed with negative or destructive emotionalism and experiencing meaninglessness in life in an existential manner has become almost the order of modern life. It is needless to say that for sensitive people it is a perennial problem. Those who take on things defying all the moral and ethical codes seem to have little or less botheration. They do escape the severity of the problems or challenges faced by intellectuals, although they end up with a disaster. It is truly a frustrating fact that reading does make a man learned but not necessarily wise. Therefore it would be better to first delearn and then systematically relearn with proper understanding so that one can equip self consciously with a right and pragmatically suitable knowledge to tread on a righteous path. The youth of today is groping in darkness and periodically snared in the mesh of pessimism. Everything is available in abundance around him but he lacks the art of pruning for self betterment. Therefore, this paper envisages the life free from all shackles for today's youth and for the same proposes a practical way of experiencing heart based meditation- Heartfulness. So let's get ready to get involved in a transformation process where one who goes in never comes out. Not because he has ceased to exist, or is dead, but because he has transformed into master. Spiritual power will give the strength to the purpose of living. Finally the paper would attempt to replace stress, conflict and the chaos within by peace, love and harmony, through heart based meditation.

Keywords: Restlessness, Righteous, Pessimism, Heartfulness, Meditation

Introduction

Why do we need a balanced existence?

Present day young minds are being excellently prepared for future challenges in an increasingly competitive world, but still there is a pressing need for the youths to equip themselves with better values, behavior and attitudes. Its about striving to provide them with means of overall wellness rather success and power. Today we are in the midst of multiple crisis – economic, environmental, and social. And we cannot wait for a leader to ride in on a white horse to save us. We all need to find the leader in the mirror, and take the steps needed to make a difference, both in our communities

and at the other end of the world[1]. What kind of future do we view for the world as a whole? Is it a world of jealousy, fight, restlessness, anarchy and intolerance? Or a future filled with happiness, contentment and high performance individuals, not limited to materialism, but human condition. If it's the second case then what are we doing today? There are people from all fields doing extremely good work for humanity. At the same time we also see the people of opposite qualities. If we constantly put future in our view, how can we change our attitude to achieve this?

We live in an age of disruption. Any review of underlying forces will convince us that the rate of disruption will continue to go up, not down. It's too late to reverse these forces and trends. So if we cannot control the rate of exterior disruption, what, if anything, *can* we control? The only thing we can really control or shape is *our interior response*: how we show up when disruption hits. The future of our social systems, societies and the planet as a whole depends in no small way on the choices we make in these moments[2]. We need leader who should be a role model and not just an inspirator. There are many personalities such as Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa who lived and followed what they preached.

Many times looking around the world, we see smart leaders – in politics, in business, in media – making terrible decisions. What they're lacking is not IQ, but wisdom. Which is no surprise; it has never been harder to tap into our inner wisdom, because in order to do so, we have to disconnect from all our omnipresent devices – our gadgets, our screens, our social media – and reconnect with ourselves. Being connected in a shallow way to the entire world can prevent us from being deeply connected to those closest to us – including ourselves. And that is where wisdom is found. After all, the function of a leadership is to be able to see the iceberg before it hits the *Titanic* [3].

What's necessary today is not only a new approach to leadership. We need to go beyond the concept of leadership. We must discover a more profound and practical integration of the head, heart and hand – of the intelligences of the open mind, open heart, and open will – at both an individual and a collective level. The leaders or individuals or groups who initiate innovation are the “artists”. They create something new and bring it to the world. We can observe *what* leaders do, *how* they do it, what strategies and processes they deploy. But we can't see the inner place, the *Source* from which people act when, for example, they operate at their highest possible level or, alternatively, when they act without engagement or commitment. It is their interior condition – the source and quality of attention. The same person in the same situation doing the same thing can effect a totally different outcome depending on the inner place from where that action is coming. We can call it “seeing from our deepest source”: that is sensing and operating from one's highest future potential. It is the state each of us can *experience* when we open not just our minds but our *hearts* and our wills – our impetus to act – in order to deal with the new realities emerging all around us[4].

Fundamentals of meditation

Meditation means to think continuously of the same thing. It is the time that we spend with our inner self.

Meditation is defined as “inner observation in silence”, which has got a positive influence on both mind and the body. For millennia, Raja Yoga meditation has proved its efficacy in producing calmness and peace, improving emotional stability, managing chronic ailments, enhancing health status and quality of life. Patanjali presented his practical approach to the world a few thousand years ago as the eightfold path:

Yama: (Good conduct) Abstention from harming others, from falsehood, from theft, from incontinence, and from greed.

Niyama:(Regularity,Observation)Observance of purity, contentment, mortification, self study, devotion to God.

Asana:(Posture) Steady and comfortable posture, in reference to posture used for meditation practices.

Pranayama: (Breath Regulation) Control of breadth.

Pratyahara: (Inner withdrawal) Withdrawal of the mind from the senses and external objects.

Dharana: (Mental focus) It means concentration, or fixing the mind.

Dhyana: (Meditation) Meditation on the goal.

Samadhi:(Original condition / Balance / Super conscious state) Perfect balance as in the spiritual condition of absolute or bliss.[5-6]

In the current times it is not very easy to follow this method meticulously. So many simplified methods have emerged with subtle modifications to suit the current life styles. Example : Heartfulness meditation, Transcendental meditation, Kundalini yoga, Sudarshan kriya yoga etc.

Heartfulness provides a way of integrating various elements of yoga, without having to take up each step individually, through the practices of relaxation, meditation, cleaning of subtle body, and connecting with the Source through prayer. It is a complete package that provides simple practices for anyone who aspires to evolve.

The Oxford dictionary has given following definitions of Heartfulness: The fact or quality of being heartfelt. Sincerity or warmth of feeling or expression[7]. According to Hindu tradition and Sanskrit scriptures this concept can be defined as: “the realization of the inner self of its eternal connection with the higher self inside one’s own heart and seeking its guidance from within- so as to be free from the burden of the results of one’s own thoughts and actions.” This produces a state of “Dependence on the guidance from within” - in all the aspects of day to day living resulting in a well-

balanced thinking and approach to life[8]. It is the unregulated mind, which is the main culprit of all the mental stress and its associated ill effects on the person [9].

Heart Based Meditation

Heartfulness is heart based meditation. It is a simple and practical way to experience the hearts unlimited resources. Through Heartfulness, we are able to really listen to the heart which enables us to master our life in a joyful way. This exercise of fine – tuning the heart with the mind is done through a stepwise scientific approach to meditation. In Heartfulness meditation you sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and start with a thought that divine light is present in your heart. Why do we meditate on the heart?

According to P. Rajagopalachari , “It is universally accepted in the system that **the heart is the seat of Divinity**. So when we approach Divinity through human system, we can do so by feeling this presence in our heart. Also human being is described by his heart. For example : kind hearted, soft hearted, bitter hearted, good hearted etc. Human character is defined by the heart. Human life is itself centred in the heart, as even if every other organ fails, life still exists. But if the heart stops everything stops. While meditation on the heart, we are able to affect the whole system in a total way. This is because blood circulation starts and ends with the heart. So this Divinity is passed on to each and every cell of human body. So when heart is purified it helps in the purification of each and every cell of human body and the whole system. According to Master, human heart has infinite capabilities well beyond those attributed to the organ of flesh-considered as the main organ of the body. The heart is the seat of the soul”. [10]

Heartfulness is a process of discovering meditation first, just like that of a child learning through wonder and direct observation. These programs are designed in a way so as to touch the heart, offer relaxation, introspection and meditation.

Practical Experiences

Being a part of conducting such a program at Government Engineering College, Aurangabad, I have seen the change in students’ approach towards their friends, their career, their aim in life in general. Heart based meditation workshops are being conducted throughout the world but I would refer some of these conducted in western part of India. Harshal Jawale, zonal co-ordinator of Heartfulness, had a unique experience at MIT School of Management, Pune (India). The staff of this institute were concerned and worried about the defaulter students. To everyone’s surprise it was seen that more than 70% of them did attend it regularly for 3 days. Further we were told that trouble makers changed to trouble shooters. A similar session was conducted at Bhima Institute of Management and Technology, Kolhapur, where nearly 1000 students attended and experienced heart based meditation.

I had an opportunity to co-ordinate in various such sessions and also the ones for faculty of the Institute/ College/University. In December 2016 we started this

program for the students of “Earn and Learn” Scheme of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad which went on till the end of academic year that is March 2017. Actually the students enrolled under this scheme come from rural areas and poor socio-economic background and University provides them the work for which they are paid and this helps to lower the financial burden on their family. After the 3- days workshop attended by more than 200 youths, they were more than willing to go for weekly sessions which our team volunteered for. It was very encouraging. Presently weekly sessions are going on at Girl’s hostel in the University Campus. The Vice-Chancellor of the university, Directors of various student welfare schemes like NSS, NYKS, etc. have been very co-operative to carry on such an activity which is so simple at the same time very effective, has no pre-conditions and demands nothing than willingness on the part of the one who wishes to experience it. There are now some colleges, who have come forward in making Heartfulness meditation as their regular activity. Also the colleges affiliated to the University come under NSS (National Service Scheme), where college each adopts a village and the youths of NSS team stay in that village for a period of 7 to 10 days and volunteer for various welfare works like cleanliness drive, spreading health awareness and so on. During this camp Heartfulness team is invited to conduct meditation. Now because of these camps even villagers have started meditating.

Heart based meditation is also conducted for faculty members of various educational institutions. Teachers are first and foremost inspiring role models for students, encouraging them to be the future citizens and decision-makers of the world. It is a responsibility that requires commitment and, most of all, love.

Conclusion

According to Coralie Imbert, a French freediver and meditation practitioner-“ By evolving through meditation and asking myself questions, I was in a position to channel and regulate my mind, and to much better manage stress and pressure”. She adds by saying that today her approach is totally different and now she lives it as a competition with herself”[11]. All educationalists and especially those associated with youth recognize the need for interactive, dynamic learning environments and holistic education, and this has been so since the ancient gurukula style of learning in the East and Socratic learning in the West. So enter the need for the heartfulness approach for teachers. It creates a balanced outlook towards their responsibilities. Heartfulness embraces critical thinking, questioning, observation and experiential learning. It also embraces the dimension that is critical to 21st century education, and that is the role of the heart in self-development.

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