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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR A TRAINING PACKAGE COMBINING
FORMAL AND INFORMAL ZEN MEDITATION WITH BEHAVIO-
RAL SELF-CONTROL STRATEGIES**

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In none of this author's previous studies which used Eastern and Western self-control techniques, have the actual contents of the techniques been described in a form which would allow them to be replicated by other psychologists and educators. Therefore, both for clinical and research purposes, the essentials of the techniques, including: 1) a brief introduction to Zen meditation; 2) a description of formal Zen breath meditation; and 3) a description of informal meditation combined behavioral self-control techniques (i.e., "Contingent informal meditation") are briefly summarized.

Purpose.

The purpose of the introduction is to give clients a clear, simple overview of what meditation is, and what are some of the results they might be able to expect. No specific journal articles are cited, and the introduction is not delivered in the structured form presented here, although most of the points discussed below are covered in some manner.

*Content: Introductory Lecture***

In the past fifteen years, a new conception of the person has begun to emerge within the Western scientific community. This conception has involved a new view of the nervous system, and a new view of man's potential for self-regulation. Because of reports from India and the Orient detailing extraordinary feats of body control and altered states of consciousness by Zen and Yoga masters, Western science has begun to explore Eastern religions to determine whether some of their techniques, such as meditation and yoga, might have medical and therapeutic value for Western settings.

Zazen (Zen meditation). The word *Za* means "sitting" and the word *Zen* comes from an Indian word meaning meditation. This "sitting meditation" is not a passive technique, but rather an active exercise which requires hard work. Its goal is not a contemplative life withdrawn from the cares of the world, but a state of mind which can give renewed strength and calmness to deal with daily events. For example, the samurai warriors of Japan meditated to gain strength for battle; and the Japanese martial arts of fencing, jujitsu, and Aikido also require the centeredness which medi-

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** Articles relevant to the introductory lecture include: Kamiya, 1969; Barber, DiCara, Kamiya, Miller, Shapiro, & Stoyva, 1970; Tart, 1969; Kasamatsu and Hirari, 1966; Anandi, Chhina, and Singh, 1961; Cohen, 1969; Maupin, 1965; and Lesh, 1971.

tation can give.

Studies have shown that Zen monks during meditation are significantly more aware than ordinary subjects to the sounds that are going on around them. At the same time, the monks are able to produce both alpha and theta waves (measured by EEG). These waves are thought to be indicative of states of calmness and restfulness. Thus, the monks have attained simultaneously a state of intense awareness of their environment and a state of deep rest and quiet.

It seems important at this point to clarify some possible misconceptions about meditation. First, the effects of meditation have been compared to the effects of psychedelic drugs. It is true that often people have images, thoughts, and sometimes even hallucinations while they are meditating. These images, however, are not the goal of meditation. Second, meditation is nothing magical. It takes patience and practice; you have to work at it; and, just by meditating, all life's problems will not be solved.

On the other hand, meditation is potentially a very powerful tool, and it is equally important to suggest what you might be able to expect from meditation the first month you practice it. Studies have shown that Zen meditation can have a strong effect within the first two to four weeks. Some of these effects can be measured physiologically—e.g., brain wave states, slower breathing, slower heart rate. These all contribute to a state of relaxation and inner calm. Meditation may help you become more aware, both of what is going on outside you, and what is happening within you—your thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears. Thus, although meditation won't solve all your problems, it can give you the calmness, the awareness, and the self-control to actively work on solving those problems.

FORMAL ZEN MEDITATION: INSTRUCTIONS*

1. *Choosing a setting.* Pick a quiet room, where there will be few distractions. There should be a carpet on the floor, and a pillow on which you can sit. The room should not have bright lights, nor should it be dark. Wear comfortable clothing that are loose fitting. Take off your shoes; take off your socks if you wish.

2. *Choosing a position.* The most efficient meditation posture is the full lotus position, in which the foot of the right leg is over the left thigh and the foot of the left leg is over the right thigh. This posture is not just a matter of showmanship, but is actually the most physically solid and "centered" posture because it establishes a wide triangular base, the three points being the buttocks and the two knees. (At the start, if the full lotus is not comfortable, it is not worth trying to force the body into it; rather, pick any sitting position which approximates this posture and in which you feel the most comfortable)**. Buttocks should rest on

* Adapted from Maupin, 1965; Weinpahl, 1964; Lesh, 1961; and Kapleau, 1967.

** Two successive approximations to the full lotus position are the half and the quarter lotus. In the half lotus, the left foot is placed over right thigh and the right foot is placed under the left thigh, with both knees still touching the mat. In the quarter lotus, the left foot rests on the calf of the right leg, and again both knees are supposed to rest on the mat (After Kapleau, 1967).

the pillow, knees on the floor. The two palms face upward, the thumb tips touching each other. (Left handed people should put the right palm on top; right handed people should put the left hand on top). Place the hands in your lap.

Bend forward to thrust the buttocks out, then bring the trunk to an erect posture, with your head and back straight. Your ears should be in line with your shoulder and the tip of your nose in line with your navel. Your body from the waist up should now be weightless, free from pressure or strain. You may keep your eyes closed or open, as you prefer. If you have them open, fix them, unfocused, on the floor at a point about two or three feet in front of you. The tip of your tongue should be lightly touching the back of your upper teeth. Now raise your whole body and slowly and quietly, move it repeatedly to the left and to the right, forward and around until you feel best the position.

3. *The process of meditation.* Take two deep breaths; be aware of how you are controlling the amount of air you take in. We can breath "voluntarily" as you just did, or our breathing can come under autonomic control i.e., we breath automatically, whether or not we are aware of it. For example, thus far today, you probably breathed very well, and yet were not aware of the fact that you were breathing. In meditation, we attempt to breathe as free and easily as we do "automatically" and, at the same time, maintain an awareness of the process of breathing.

Now, breathe through your nose, letting the air come in by distending the diaphragm. Don't draw air in, rather let it come to you, slowly letting the distending of your diaphragm draw in all the air you need. Then, exhale slowly and completely, letting all the air out of your lungs. As you exhale, slowly count "one." Now inhale again, then exhale to the count of "two." And so on up to ten. Once you reach ten, start over again with one and repeat up to ten again, etc. Try to keep your mind on the breath and the numbers, and do not count mechanically or absentmindedly.

You may find the counting difficult as your mind wanders. Let random thoughts arise and vanish as they will; do not become involved with them; if images or ideas come into awareness, do not follow them; do not try to expel them, but merely note the thought, then relax, let go, and continue to focus on the inhalations and exhalations of your breath*.

As you become able to do the counting with reasonable success, start playing the following game, which will help you focus your mind below your navel. As you count "one" and are slowly exhaling, pretend that the "one" is going down, down, down into your stomach. Then think of its being down there as you inhale

* A device borrowed from behavioral self-observation strategies which is helpful in focusing the individual's attention on the task of breathing is the wrist counter. The individual is told to hold the wrist counter in his palm and is instructed as follows: "Everytime you find yourself caught up in some thought or other, punch the wrist counter. Then, continue to relax, let go, and focus on your breathing." In this way the wrist counter becomes a cue for returning to the task of breathing. (cf. Van Nuys, 1971). The wrist counter may also help facilitate generalization in learning from formal to informal meditation.

and begin to count "two." As you exhale, bring the two down and place it in the stomach beside the "one." Eventually you will find that your mind itself, so to speak, will descend into your stomach.

You may find that you become anxious or uncomfortable. This is because sitting still and concentrating like this restricts the usual ways we have of avoiding discomfort. If you feel anxious, watch this anxiousness and continue to focus on your breathing. If you feel pleasant, watch this feeling also, while continuing to focus on your breathing. Eventually you will be able to be quiet in both body and mind.

4. At the end of the meditation period, rock forward and around in a small circle a half-dozen times. Rub your palms together rapidly, and vigorously massage your hair and scalp for a few seconds.

INFORMAL MEDITATION PLUS BEHAVIOR SELF-CONTROL

STRATEGIES: "CONTINGENT" INFORMAL MEDITATION*

Introduction. We've been talking about formal Zen meditation, which may be practiced twice a day at specific times. Meditation can also be useful at other times during the day, especially at times of stress. We're going to work now on ways of understanding what events make us tense during the day, and then on ways to relax once we become aware that we are anxious.

Awareness. List below current problems, difficulties, or concerns which you are having or have had that cause you to become tense and anxious:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____

* Contingent informal meditation involves training in behavioral self-observation and functional analysis (cf. Kazdin, 1974; Goodwin, 1969) as an initial part of the procedure. Then, the procedure combines behavioral self-control strategies such as relaxation (Jacobson, 1971); thought stopping (Wolpe, 1969); covert self-modeling (Cautela, 1971; Hosford, 1975); and covert self-instructions (Meichenbaum and Cameron, 1974); with the practice of informal meditation (Weinpahl, 1964; Rahula, 1959). This procedure has been called "contingent informal meditation" because its performance is made contingent upon certain antecedent cues (e.g., tension, anger, stress). This process of anxiety management has been conceptualized within a social learning framework as follows:

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|---|--|
| 1. Target behavior (TB) stimulus occurs which causes tension: e.g. an argument, inability to control external environment. Cues are either external and/or internal. | 2. Awareness: Discrimination plus labeling of Target behavior as antecedent to maladaptive behavior chain. Accurate functional analysis of environment facilitated by formal meditation. |
| 3. Kwat! (Aversive imagery or verbal statement; physical action) to interrupt maladaptive response: e.g. covert self-statement No! Stop!; physical action: e.g. clenching jaws and first. | 4. Contingent informal breath meditation which functions as a competing response which is incompatible with tension. |

(After Shapiro, 1971; modified from Homme, 1965; Mahoney, 1971)

Let's pick situation *a*, now, and see if we can make it as specific as possible. Who is present; where are you; what kinds of things are you doing, saying, thinking. Now close your eyes and imagine yourself in that situation, and allow yourself to experience the tension that you normally feel. Observe your tension. It's all right to let yourself feel anxious. You're in a safe place here, and the tense scene is not actually happening. Continue to observe your tension, noting where in your body you feel tense: is your heart beating faster; is your breathing more rapid; how does your stomach feel? What kinds of images do you have in your head? What sort of things are you saying to yourself? Are you saying things like: I am helpless; I am not competent to handle this situation? Let yourself go and just experience all that is happening to you.

Interruption of sequence and competing response. Once you have observed these thoughts and actions, say to yourself "Stop!" as you clench your fist and your jaw*. Then relax your fingers and your jaw and imagine yourself beginning to do an informal breath meditation: you are closing your eyes and beginning to focus on your breathing. Now, actually take two deep breaths through your nose, and as you exhale let your "center" sink into your stomach.

Say to yourself: 1) Your name: "I am _____."
 2) "I am breath" (and take another deep breath).
 3) "I am calm and relaxed and am in control" (and take two more deep breaths, letting your "center" sink to your stomach as you exhale).

Now imagine yourself becoming more and more relaxed; image yourself meditating, feeling calm, and in control. At the count of ten you may open your eyes, and you will feel calm, relaxed, and wide awake.

A final note. Breathing is the most simple and basic action we do. If we didn't breathe, we wouldn't be alive. If we weren't breathing, we wouldn't be able to get angry or tense or upset. When you get anxious, remember that you are "just breath" and return to that simple behavior.

IN VIVO: AWARENESS PLUS PRACTICE

In vivo awareness. Before actually teaching the skills of formal and contingent informal meditation, normally one or two weeks are spent in self-observation training. Clients are given a wrist counter (or a similar type of counting device) and asked to monitor the frequency of anxious feelings. They are also given a self-observation form, varying from an unstructured journal to a more structured data collection sheet. They are asked to note on this form the following: A) Antecedents to tension: e.g., what was happening right before; who was present; where were you;

* In effect, this "Stop!" is an attempt to interrupt the maladaptive behavioral sequence long enough to begin the competing response of informal meditation. In behavioral terms this Stop! is referred to as the technique of thought stopping (Wolpe, 1969). In Zen, it can be conceptualized in terms of a symbolic Kwat! applied by the individual to himself (Shapiro, 1971).

B) Behavior of tension: where did you feel tense; what did you say to yourself during the time you were tense; do you get tense in the same way in every situation; and C) Consequences of tension: i.e., what did you do to relieve the tension; how did you act differently as a result of the anxious feelings. This self-observation usually provides helpful information in making up the list of anxiety-related situations during the awareness component of contingent informal meditation training. *In vivo practice.* Clients are normally instructed to practice formal meditation for at least ten to fifteen minutes, two times a day. They are instructed to practice contingent informal meditation skills throughout the day whenever they become aware that they are feeling tense, anxious, or stressful.

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