

LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT THROUGH MIND MANAGEMENT BY MEDITATION - A SCIENTIFIC YOGIC TECHNIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Good education is the product of good administration and the administration is not simply a managerial occupation. It demands new dimensions of knowledge, techniques and skills. Today administrators are confronting a variety of problems in their respective organizations. The complex environments of the educational institutions require leaders and heads with greater skills in communication, collaboration, and community building. Even though the principals and administrators possess all the required skills to be an effective educational leader, sometimes they struggle to cope up with their job related stress. So they find it difficult to cope up with their stress related burdens and become helpless. To avoid this, mind has to be managed properly whatever the external environment stresses one. To gain mind management meditation is an effective tool. Mind works only within the boundaries of the field of whatever one have previously heard, seen, thought of, or imagined. Maharishi Patanjali says that "you can cross that field by training your mind, and all its faculties, so that you can go beyond". Meditation helps in controlling the mind. By doing regular meditation, it is possible to put a switch on the mind and turn it off when it is not needed. In fact, it teaches how to manage the mind just by witnessing it through neutral energy. With the help of meditation the educational leaders can tackle their job related stress; like the recent one based on fees structure of schools. Meditation is where thoughts get dissolved naturally, enhancing your concentration power, memory power, will power, right thinking, and fitness power, automatically. Meditation is neither a mental exercise nor a practice. It is a direct and natural process beyond mind itself.

Keywords: Educational Leaders, Mind Management, Administrators, Meditation, Scientific Yogic Technique.

INTRODUCTION

Leaders in education are the school and college heads and administrators who are considered to be as the backbone of the society. Good education is the product of good administration and the administration is not simply a managerial occupation. It demands new dimensions of knowledge, techniques and skills. Today administrators are confronting a variety of problems in their respective organizations. In the past, administrators could control and manipulate more readily because organizations were less complicated and environments were more stable but now many complex forces have emerged like continuous changes and leadership authenticity, so the administrators and organizations both are under security. The complex

environments of the educational institutions require leaders and heads with greater skills in communication, collaboration, and community building. Even though the principals and administrators possess all the required skills to be an effective educational leader, sometimes they struggle to cope up with their job related stress. So they find it difficult to cope up with their stress related burdens and become helpless. They need to have a healthy mind to fight with their job stress. If mind is entertained with healthy thoughts, good health can be maintained. If sickly thoughts are being held in the mind, good health, beauty, and harmony cannot be expected and thereby finally they will be the victim of mental and heart diseases. To avoid this mind has to be managed properly whatever the external environment stresses one. To gain mind management

meditation is an effective tool. Meditation helps in controlling the mind. By doing regular meditation, it is possible to put a switch on the mind and turn it off when it is not needed. In fact, it teaches how to manage the mind just by witnessing it through neutral energy. With the help of meditation the educational leaders can tackle their job related stress; like the recent one based on fees structure of schools.

Role of Educational Leaders

The job of the educational leaders like school and college principals, headmasters, administrative officers, etc. is always the most complex and demanding. Moreover they are the ones who are responsible for establishing the climate and culture of their respective educational institutions. They have to lead the schools and colleges and are ultimately responsible for everything that takes place at their institutions. When things go well, they are appreciated. When the institution's reputation is high, they are given the credit. The other side of that coin, of course, is that, when their educational institutions are doing badly, the heads are in the front line of criticism. They are expected to be visible at all times (in several places at once). They should have the skills to personally deal with every serious situation that arise. They have to attend all sports, matches, concerts and drama productions. They are also expected to be a pillar of the local community.

They must be able to,

- Provide strategic leadership in teaching and knowledge transfer.
- Create a positive environment and manage negative situations.
- Develop the plan which is appropriate and needy.
- Must have effective communication.
- Develop smooth working relationships between the school, colleges and colleagues with other schools and colleges.
- Be an instructional leader.
- Plan for effective professional development.
- Guide teachers.
- Handle discipline.

- Attend events and
- All the other minute details that come with supervising an educational institution.

School and college principals and administrative officers try to do all these by themselves - and usually (with a few noble exceptions) fail, generally losing their sense of priorities along the way.

The following factors make the principalship highly stressful:

- Long hours-for most, a 60- to 80-hour work per week.
- Workload and complexity of job.
- Supervision of evening activities "unending".
- Minimal pay difference between top teacher and administrator.
- Feeling overwhelmed with very high expectations.
- State and district mandates that require "mountains" of paper work.
- Increasingly complex society and social problems.

Many principals complain that they are forced to spend too much time handling administrative tasks such as setting bus schedules and overseeing custodians, and too little time on instructional leadership. Erosion of authority to effect change, escalating expectations of accountability, lack of support, and a stressful political environment for school and college leaders are other factors that cause school principals either to consider leaving the field entirely or to request classroom teaching assignments.

Effects of Job Stress

The following are several other effects of stress on school principals' thinking, behavior and emotional state.

- Anxiety
- Emotional Instability
- Feeling Overwhelmed
- Cognitive Impairment
- Psychosomatic Illness
- Anger

This stress could be putting the educational heads' health at risk, as many find themselves unable to unwind out of their educational institutions. All these may lead to several

psychological problems mainly depression and due to this they get mind related diseases like cardio vascular diseases, respiratory problems, migraines, etc which finally affect their heart, lungs and the other related body systems. It is all in the mind that builds up the leadership and keeps on going up reaching higher altitudes in the field of education. But if the mind is healthy enough to manage every problem then the educational leaders will be able to avoid all sorts of psychological problems which in turn will free them from physiological ailments.

Mind – Meaning and Functions

Mind is said to be subtle and hidden. Since the mind has no physical existence it is very difficult to understand the nature of the mind. But the existence of the mind can't be denied, as many of the problems physical, mental and psychological are the outcome of the mental condition. It is clear from the points that the mind is very unstable. Mind runs after the objects it likes but runs away from the objects that it dislikes. Mind exists in the body but it is distinct from the body and organs. One perceives the external objects through sense organs but with the help of the mind. Perception of any event is not possible without the presence of mind. So in every event of perception there is an external object, an organ of perception (ears, eyes, nose tongue or skin) and there is mind and the 'Knower' or 'self'. All these are connected very closely, inseparable but still distinct from each other. The mind can multiply or divide the strength of the Body. The person can't work if he is mentally not prepared for the work but a person can work with extra energy if he has mentally decided to work. The mind has tremendous speed. It can travel from one point to another point at infinite distance within fraction of a second. The mind interconnects the 'Self' with the physical body. The mind controls the physical organs through Brain, Autonomous Nervous System, and Endocrine System. Seven functions of the mind are summarized as follows.

- Consciousness
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Perceptions
- Memory

- Intelligence
- Judgment.

States of Mind in Yoga Philosophy

Depending on the degree of distraction, Yoga philosophy categorizes the mind under five stages of being.

- Kshipta or disturbed
- Mudha or stupefied
- Vikshipta or distracted
- Ekagra or concentrated and
- Niruddha or the absolutely balanced state of mind.

While the first three stages are negative and cause impediments to the healthy growth of the mind and its horizons, the following two are the desired states of being. When the mind is in its earliest stage of disturbance, it lacks judgment and is generally hyperactive, unable to ignore external stimuli. The next stage of the mudha or stupefied state of mind is distinguished by inertia, lethargy, sluggishness, vice, ignorance and sleep. The state of vikshipta is an advanced stage of the kshipta mind, when it still lacks consistency and is unable to quieten down or reflect. Ekagra and niruddha are the mental levels at which, the mind almost ceases to be affected by the pains and miseries of mortal existence. They are the calmest and most peaceful states of mind. Ekagra or the tranquil state of mind is as near to inner stillness as one is ever likely to get. This state of mind is highly conducive to concentration and meditation, which is why the yoga system aims at maintaining and developing it as consistently as possible through various yogic meditational practices. The last stage or niruddha is that rare state of being, where the mind is totally undisturbed and purified by the flow of positive energy. Niruddha is the ultimate desired mental stage in yogic practices. It is at this pristine state alone that we are able to realize the true nature of our souls. These last two states of mind are positive and conducive to meditation.

Need For Mind Management

"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is the faithful servant. We have created a society that serves the servant and has forgotten the gift." Einstein.

The human mind functions within a certain field. Mind works

only within the boundaries of the field of whatever one have previously heard, seen, thought of, or imagined. Maharishi Patanjali says that "you can cross that field by training your mind, and all its faculties, so that you can go beyond". According to Maharishi Patanjali, the mind (Chitta) is made up of three faculties – Manas (Mind & Memory), Buddhi (Intellect), and Ahamkara (Ego). Manas are the recording faculty, which receives impressions gathered by the senses from the outside world. Buddhi is the discriminative faculty, which classifies these impressions and reacts to them. Ahamkara is the ego-sense, which claims these impressions as its own and stores them up as individual knowledge. The healthy growth and development of the mind can be disrupted by certain obstacles or impairments collectively called as Impediments. Nine such impediments are listed. They are sickness, incompetence, doubt, delusion, fatigue, overindulgence, confusion, lack of perseverance and regression. These nine conditions are the greatest causes of all sorrows, miseries and pain, which disturb the mind and result in distractions and loss of mental tranquility. All these interruptions produce symptoms such as, mental discomfort, negative thinking, the inability to be at ease in different body postures, and difficulty in controlling one's breath. So the mind has to be managed properly to avoid all these problems.

Mind Management Through Meditation

One should have to control movements of mind and make it stable whenever needed, as per the requirements. But this is the most difficult part because of unstable nature of mind. This process of making mind stable is called concentration. This is true for any function of mind. Efforts are being continuously made to find out the ways and means to establish control over mind. Meditation is one of the very effective ways to control the mind. This control can't be achieved in short period. Meditation is a systematically designed scientific technique to achieve this step by step. Meditation, an ancient spiritual tradition is for millions of people around the world a 15- or 20-minute daily ritual. While there are several forms of meditation, generally it involves focusing on the breathing and ignoring everyday thoughts. Relaxation, which is at the heart of meditation, has long been known to quiet a turbulent mind,

reduce stress, and provide pain relief. Meditation means a steady, continuous flow of attention, directed towards the same point of region. The flow of attention is continuous, uninterrupted, and even. Meditation is not a mechanical practice but an electrifying practice. The ego and arrogance become humble and then insignificant.

Throughout the day, when experiencing stress, the body automatically reacts in ways that prepare to fight or run. In some cases of extreme danger, this physical response is helpful. However, a prolonged state of such agitation can cause physical damage to every part of the body. Meditation affects the body in exactly the opposite ways that stress does, restoring the body to a calm state, helping the body to repair itself, and preventing new damage due to the physical effects of stress. When practicing meditation, the heart rate and breathing slow down, blood pressure normalizes, we use oxygen more efficiently, and sweat less. Also, the adrenal glands produce less cortisol, the mind ages at a slower rate, and the immune function improves. The mind also clears and the creativity increases. People who meditate regularly find it easier to give up life-damaging habits like smoking, drinking and drugs. Meditation is where thoughts get dissolved naturally, enhancing your concentration power, memory power, will power, right thinking, and fitness power, automatically. Meditation is neither a mental exercise nor a practice. It is a direct and natural process beyond mind itself.

Benefits of Meditation

The following are some of the benefits of meditation:

- It lowers oxygen consumption.
- It decreases respiratory rate.
- It increases blood flow and slows the heart rate.
- Increases exercise tolerance in heart patients.
- Leads to a deeper level of relaxation.
- Good for people with high blood pressure as it brings the B.P. to normal.
- Reduces anxiety attacks by lowering the levels of blood lactate.
- Decreases muscle tension (any pain due to tension) and headaches.

- Builds self-confidence.
- It increases serotonin production which influences mood and behaviour. Low levels of serotonin are associated with depression, obesity, insomnia and headaches.
- Helps in chronic diseases like allergies, arthritis etc.
- Reduces Pre- menstrual Syndrome.
- Helps in post-operative healing.
- Enhances the immune system. Research has revealed that meditation increases activity of 'natural-killer cells', which kill bacteria and cancer cells.
- Also reduces activity of viruses and emotional distress.

With the above effects of meditation, the meditators will be able to calm their mind so that they will be able to manage the mind. Through this ability of mind management the school and college heads can cope up with the difficulties in their job thereby avoiding job related stress, anxiety, depression, etc. When they develop the ability to avoid all these ill effects through meditation, then they can be free from psychological ailments also. With this type of mind management through meditation the educational leaders can work more effectively.

Related Studies on Meditation

Ospina, Bond and their fellow researchers (2007) analyzed 813 studies on the impact of meditation on conditions such as hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and substance abuse. The review found some evidence that certain types of meditation reduce blood pressure and stress in clinical populations and healthy individuals; meditation seemed to increase verbal creativity and reduce heart rate, blood pressure and cholesterol. Depression is a common mood disorder characterized by feelings of guilt, hopelessness and worthlessness. A review of five different RCTs evaluated yoga-based interventions for depression and depressive disorders (Pilkington et al. 2005). For mild to severe depressive disorders, the researchers reported some positive outcomes and no adverse effects from the yoga interventions.

During the past three decades, a handful of scientists have

delved deeper into the mysteries of meditation, trying to understand how the mind affects the body. Studies show that daily meditation can indeed be medication -- creating long-lasting physiological effects that reduce high blood pressure and even help unclog arteries to reverse heart disease. Harvard researcher Herbert Benson, (2000) has studied and written about the physiologic effects of meditation over the past 30 years. Also president of the Mind/Body Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, Benson co-authored a recently published -- albeit small -- study mapping, for the first time, exactly what happens in the brain during meditation. Five long-time meditation practitioners were involved in the study. Each had practiced Kundalini, an Eastern form of meditation, for at least four years. While meditating, each was given a brain scan called an MRI. "There was a striking quietude across the entire brain which was documented through MRI," Benson told WebMD. "The areas of the brain that became active from that quietude were those that control metabolism, heart rate, etc.," said Benson, who is also Associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. The results were published recently in the *Journal Stroke*.

Andrew et al (1999) studied the effect of meditation in secondary school teachers. Teachers experience a high level of stress and burnout. Meditation training, which has previously been found to help individuals manage stress, may be an ideal low-cost stress management technique for teachers. A pilot study was run to test the effectiveness of meditation training for student teachers. Subjects were recruited from a university teaching credential program and assigned to either a meditation training or control group. Subjects in the meditation training were taught the RISE response, which includes a simple meditation technique using sound as a focusing device and three corollary techniques. The program prescribed a formal meditation practice period while the three corollary practices were to be used at any time to remind subjects to focus attention. Subjects assigned to the meditation group attended four 45-minute meditation training sessions. The meditation group subjects were found to significantly reduce their stress symptoms in the post-test measurements when compared to the control group in the

domains of emotional manifestations, gastronomic distress and behavioral manifestations.

The study of Travis, (1979) used the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking to measure figural and verbal creativity in a control group and in a group that subsequently learned the Transcendental Meditation technique. On the post-test 5 months later, the Transcendental Meditation group scored significantly higher on figural originality and flexibility and on verbal fluency (Figure 1).

Implications of Meditation on Educational Leaders

The success of yogic meditation depends largely on the sincerity and strength of the person behind it. It is not the duration but the intensity of the aspiring consciousness, which is more important and ultimately effective. Fatigue is to be avoided at all costs, since it weakens the power of concentration and jades the mind. Meditation puts the being of the meditating person in a condition of increased and conscious receptivity to the workings of yoga shakti or the power of yoga. With a deepening of this state of mind there is often a total withdrawal from the external environment. If meditation is practiced for half an hour daily, one will be able to face life with peace and spiritual strength. Meditation is the most powerful mental and nerve tonic. Divine energy freely flows to the adept during meditation, and exerts a benign influence on the mind, nerves, sense organs, and body. It opens the door to intuitive knowledge and realms of eternal bliss. The mind becomes calm and steady. Meditation has long been known to be a great antidote to stress. The work efficiency

of the educational leaders not only depends on their experience, intelligence, knowledge and administrative power but also on their complete personality. Their attitudes, self concept, mode of adjustment, reaction to frustrating situations are important in determining the dynamic aspects of their personality. The personality development of the educational leaders can be enhanced by a small Meditation practice regularly.

Conclusion

With the help of the technology of meditation, the educational leaders like administrators, principals will be definitely able to

- Handle difficult situations sensitively; for example the recent school fees problem – without alienating people.
- Help teachers to aspire to better performance, without offending them.
- Develop their trust.
- Hold them accountable for their actions – and avoid wasting time.

YOGA can help leaders of education to become effective leaders. Effective leadership is the forgotten imperative of education reform. Good leaders can create the vision and climate that encourages everyone in the system to reach higher and accomplish more, while inept leaders can stop promising reforms in their tracks.

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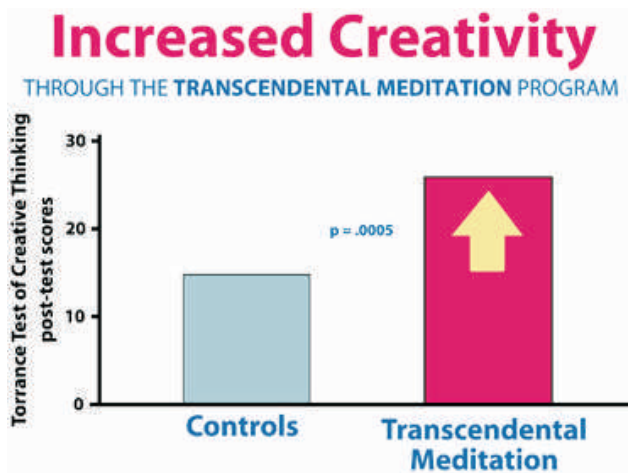


Figure 1. Increased Creativity through the Transcendental Meditation Program

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