



FINDING INNER PEACE

by Carolin Toskar



Carolin Toskar is the author of the book *Gesundheit als Weg zum Selbst* [Health as a Path to the Self] and co-founder of the Spiritual Health Foundation. She runs the Centers for Divine Straightening in Munich and Zurich with her husband Alexander Toskar.

Further Information: www.toskarhealing.com www.spiritual-health-charity.org

How can we achieve inner peace, one of the most spiritually meaningful states? Carolin Toskar, co-founder of the Spiritual Health Foundation, gives inspiring impetus to more inner peace in everyday life.



On our way to an orphanage in Thailand, we noticed a monk in the middle of the busy traffic and the activity of the city. What a contrast: he walked slowly and thoughtfully through the restlessness and the streets in his saffron robe and carrying an alms bowl with a delicate smile on his lips. What is it that seems to make him so fulfilled and open to all outside influences?

Precious Moments

My husband Alexander and I do a meditation every morning that ends with a sequence that says: May all beings be happy, may all beings fare well, may all beings be free of physical suffering, may all beings be free of mental suffering, may all beings be free of emotional suffering.

The goal that we are pursuing here may hold the key to the deep inner peace that each of us longs for. The fine, liberating state of consciousness that the meditation it directed at can be achieved when the three layers of human existence, body, mind, and soul, are free of suffering and in harmony. Patients who receive meditation training can even find their inner peace in the midst of serious physical pain, as Jon Kabat-Zinn's years of work on mindfulness has made impressively clear.



making any progress. This usually happens impulsively, unconsciously, and without achieving any real, intellectual logic or solution. And so we don't even notice that, from one moment to the next, we are irrevocably missing our true, precious life as it is happening.

"It's Not the Noise that Bothers You ..."

It is such a privilege then that I have been able to make contact with my inner peace in my practice without physical limitations. A feeling of calm, warmth, and vastness grows and then a trusting buoyancy and connectedness with everything that simply is; a peaceful happiness in the heart that is connected to a pleasant slowing down of thought processes to the point of fluid, associative thinking; no reflexive reactions to the outside world; mindful, careful words, gestures and actions. Complete calm and presence, harmony in the now.

How can these precious moments be protected? Anchored inner peace that lasts comes through spiritual growth, a spiritual ideal and conscious integration of the universal principles.* At every moment.

Inner peace can start spontaneously at any time, of course, but it needs external planning and help for support. That's why there is guidance for good nutrition, literature, and information on healthy habits in general. Calm and a relaxing environment can be essential factors and gateways to inner peace; as anyone who has ever sat on a meditation cushion knows, it doesn't happen automatically. On the contrary, a person with an untrained spirit who achieves peace superficially becomes aware of his scattered spirit and the often agonizing intellectual inner dialogs that can in turn unleash powerful emotions. There is a reason why our Western spirit is known as a restless and continuously judgmental monkey mind, a simian spirit jumping back and forth.

And this is correct. When we examine these thought processes, we quickly realize that they are either steering us into the past through memories, regrets, anger, resentment, remorse, and judgment rising to the surface or leading us into the future as when we are driven by fears, concerns, needs, the desire for recognition and plans. This can lead to a constant wanting that the person allows to revolve around him- or herself, around the ego without ever actually

When we consciously perceive and then examine our thought processes, we take an important step toward being able to abandon that automation. Zen Buddhism provides us with a helpful visualization for that. Thoughts that arise take the form of a leaf floating on a river. We can see it, greet it, and let it pass by. Then the next leaf appears. And the next, and the next – and all of them are briefly, mindfully perceived and then released again to drift on the perpetual stream.

Thought-leaves often appear with evaluations of ourselves or the people around us. They like to begin with "I should" or "He has to" or "If she just wouldn't do this or that." This mental behavior creates friction between ourselves and reality. We don't want to accept what simply is. This causes frictional loss and we carry our non-peace over into our environment and the collective consciousness.

Once there was an old monk whose student complained that the noise of a rattling window had disturbed his meditation. The old monk replied that, "It's not the noise that disturbed you, but you who disturbed the noise with your thoughts. Thank it: it is your teacher."

It can be an important insight to discover that the world was not created only for people's enjoyment but to offer the essential opportunity to learn and experience. And the best teachers often appear in the form of situations or people that appear difficult for a person.

I just read the book "Loving What Is" by Byron Katie, which starts from the point of the constantly assessing spirit of criticism and judgment. Whenever Katie asks one of her clients the third of the four central questions of The Work, namely "What would you be without these thoughts?" they give her answers like, "I would finally be free," "I would be full of peace," or "I would be happy and carefree." Amazing. As simple as that? Yes! We have freedom of choice at the moment when we become conscious of our hurtful, often even belligerent thoughts and feelings. Do we really want to

Inner Peace



of letting go. These days I think about the observation that Sathya Sai Baba made in response to the frequently stated desire “I want peace”: Get rid of the “I” and the “want” and you will have PEACE.”

Eternal calm, eternal light and eternal peace are always available deep within us. When we simply direct our external senses inward, when we are calm and free of our intellectual and emotional patterns, we sense that inner life offers this entire wealth, a perpetually available possibility of connecting to a nourishing, powerfully bubbling internal life stream. The more regularly this

think these thoughts or don't we? And how much freedom, clarity, and beauty awaits us if we train the spirit to the point that we find the seeds of judgmental thought as they are germinating and give them loving attention but deny them any more space or feed them. Like the Little Prince in Saint-Exupéry's famous novel, who very carefully removes the first baobab tree plantlets from the planet so that their root network won't some day break up his little asteroid. “Before they grow so big, the baobabs start out by being little.” That is exactly how our inner mental and emotional lives work.

Forgiving and Forgiveness

A couple of helpful steps for increasing inner peace are: Let's not criticize anything or anybody thoughtlessly or before we have examined whether or not our criticism is appropriate and constructively oriented. If we can't say that we have addressed both of these concerns for certain, let's accept the opinion of others and not get involved in unnecessary arguments. Let's take care of our own inner growth and our own business. Let's orient ourselves to our mental goals and ideals. Let's not place too much value on recognition of our actions and the opinions of others. Let's reduce our expectations. Let's practice forgiving and forgiveness.

Letting Go and Reduction

If we look at this small selection of aids, it becomes clear that inner peace obviously does not come from adding but primarily from letting go and reducing, from putting aside everything that isolates us from the eternal inner peace that is always inside of us. Words like calmness, dedication, and relaxation can express the benefits



contact is undisguised and therefore possible, the more often we will experience not only inner peace but also moments of spontaneously arising deep joy. Its cause usually can't be identified and it appears and fills us unconditionally; it comes from ourselves.

How do I encounter my innermost self? Early morning preparations with your calmness and increasing energy are particularly helpful. Whatever you choose for self-treatment, be it mental energies, yoga, Tai chi, breathing exercises, or meditation, regular mental orientation to the day supports

inner peace in everyday life and beyond over the long term. Once we are attuned that way, "being in one's own center" also radiates further, when we can leave the house and encounter everyday life with careful, peaceful thoughts and actions. And only then do we no longer perceive certain external influences at all. Where influential unpleasantness is concerned, our peaceful mindset is like a neutral rock that seeds fall on but that prevents them from taking root. And with advanced practice, these seeds don't even show up anymore.

Inner Orientation

The challenge and the necessity in the overstimulated world of today is great. Apart from the positive, innovative exchange of information, modern communication technology and the resulting constant, incessant reachability that it creates is one essential cause for the increase in restlessness and irritability. "Just another 148 emails to check ... because it happens so much. I just need to save the world real quick and then I'll be right back with you," goes the refrain of the Tim Bendzko song, which fits the prevailing zeitgeist rather well. Protecting our deep inner peace requires a fine capacity to distinguish what exchange of information is sensible and useful and where we may lose ourselves.

What do marketing experts and advertising strategists



Inner peace can start spontaneously at any time

know about inner fullness, peace, and the resulting modesty? They know that only the

strongest appeal can make its way into our overstuffed heads to unleash the desired thoughts and impulses for more consumption and short-term satisfaction. But if we are humble and satisfied with who we are, if this is our strongest internal orientation, then they cannot make us reflexively respond to the consumer appeals that more and more aggressively flow in from outside of us. We don't have to respond with an "I want it!" nor with aggressive resistance. Instead, we can simply remain largely unaffected by it.

I have just that kind of well-formed prospect in my hands. Interesting. Desire and wanting are within my mind's reach. But no. Only a heartbeat, a short pause, and the question "What would I be without these thoughts?" And I move mindfully before my mind's eye, content side by side with my monk, and a calm smile on my lips through the busy streets of Chiang Mai.

The universal principles are based on the seven cosmic functional laws of Hermes Trismegistus. These spiritual principles have an organizing and aligning effect on all sequences in the universe. A person who knows their dynamics and lives more and more in accordance with them will noticeably and presently find this higher spiritual order in the form of increased harmony and inner peace in their life. 