

Teaching Idea 4

Meditation Exercises

1. Sit the pupils on the floor. Ask them to sit cross-legged, preferably in “The Lotus Position” if they can. They should sit upright with their back straight and head level. Placing their thumbs and first fingers together, they should place their wrists on their knees. Then by half-closing the eyes and looking towards the tip of the nose they will be in a “meditation pose”.

2. Ask them to breath in, slowly and quietly,....and then out. Do the same again: “Breathe in slowly, concentrating on the breath.....hold it for a few seconds and gently breathe out, empty out the lungs and pull in the abdomen as if trying to make the navel touch the backbone.” Repeat again: “Let the abdomen out and then breathe in slowly again, filling the lungs....hold it or a few seconds....and gently out through the nostrils...” Repeat a few more times if you want.

3. Ask the pupils to give feedback on how they felt doing this exercise.

4. Discuss the effects of breathing on our minds and conversely how thoughts and emotions effect our respiration (and maybe other aspects of our bodies). Most pupils experience a calming effect. Discuss other environmental factors that calm & relax, or otherwise alter our state of mind. Do pupils have special places they go to or rituals they do which help them unwind. Are there other practices and aspects of lifestyle in Hinduism that might focus, control or otherwise effect the mind.

5. For KS3 pupils who have disruptive behaviour you can make this into a game: whenever you say “Meditation”-at any time in the lesson-they must repeat the exercise, getting into the meditation pose as fast as possible. This can be fun and a convenient way to regain the pupils’ attention, especially when they are becoming “hyper”.

6. You might mention that Hindus sometimes use mantras and sound to aid meditation. You could incorporate this exercise into other activities. You can play music or mantras from the Audio CD as they relax. Ask for feedback. Discuss the effect of such sounds (or sounds & music in general) on the mind. What moods are induced? What images come to mind?

7. Indian philosophers have long argued that the next body is formed by the current mind's functions. When the pupils are relaxed casually ask a question: "Have they heard about the man who had a habit of eating lemons?" Be descriptive: he would cut the juicy lemons in quarters and suck the juice etc. Then ask the pupils if they have saliva coming in their mouths! Is it real? Were the lemons real? If this effect can be achieved in a few seconds then

what is the long term effect of thinking negative thoughts? Is it not possible, therefore, that the body is formed according to a person's mental state of mind at death? (See in the Bhagavad-Gita Chapter 8, verses 5 & 6). Hindu practices include methods of controlling the mind, such as meditation.

To demonstrate the difficulty in controlling the mind, ask your students to think of nothing. Take feedback. Try before and after the relaxation exercises or in various other situations. Does music help rid the mind of worries or unwanted thoughts? Can mantras help?

You might also explore how all creativity takes place in the mind and through effort becomes manifest outwardly? Therefore is not "mind over matter" a reality?