

Inner Peace for World Peace

The collective human mind has created the issues our society and earth face today; therefore, we hold the power to execute solutions. Self-awareness is key to change- to growth. By becoming aware of the genuine control we all hold within our minds, and by making the time to care for them, we have the power to unite, cooperate, and understand the issues that self-ignorance has created. The simplicity of mindfulness can create inner peace within a person. When an individual has created peace within themselves, insecurities cannot persist or be projected onto others. I believe that collective mindfulness, and the impact thereof, is a crucial step to begin solving the driving crisis' humanity is confronted with.

The Meditation Initiative, or TMI, promotes the necessity of caring for one's mind through the practice of meditation. Their mission is to teach others to experience the living presence and learn to live life with mindful purpose. TMI offers free meditation sessions in K-12 public schools, the United States Armed Forces, prisons, hospitals, group homes for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking, at-risk youth, and more. By promoting the power of self-connection, The Meditation Initiative hopes to aid in stress prevention, enhance focus, and utilize techniques for anger management in an effort to improve the wellbeing of those who seek mindful understanding (The Meditation Initiative).

The Meditation Initiative sets out to acknowledge that each individual has their unique path and life experiences, and heavily stresses that there is no right or wrong when

it comes to practicing meditation. Many of us are naturally given the equipment needed to connect- the mind- which we often utilize but neglect to care for. Simply, the goal is to create a relationship with oneself in order to observe and perhaps ease negatively conditioned thoughts to stay grounded in the present. You may have personally experienced these thoughts come up more frequently due to the ongoing disorder of the current year. It is easy to get lost in perpetual movement and fall into a recurring pattern as days pass; it is easy to lose yourself to negativity, pressure, or fear. Especially during dire situations, stillness is vital for one's mentality. As to compensate for the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Meditation Initiative offers to guide virtually for those feeling lonesome in their practice.

Over the last few months, I personally have experienced the necessity and power of caring for one's mind. I found meditation as a way to connect and learn about myself as students were suddenly thrown into an abundance of free time and tests of self-sustainability. By simply taking time to pause the constant movement of the world and sit to observe, my previous questioning thoughts about humanity have become established in my mind as simple truth. I continue to learn the ways we are conditioned to allow for made-up societal pressures to control our lives- which may not even be a conscious decision. Meditation has allowed me to look at the grand scope of actions within our complex society, and find gratitude in what truly matters. I have found myself to be more understanding and cooperative to those around me and have an overall happier, more mindful, and present sense of self. I believe that practicing mindfulness in some way is a necessity that is often ignored due to the chaos and standards of our daily

lives, so I truly admire The Meditation Initiative for offering free guided practices to remind others how to care for what matters most.

In November of 2020, I had the opportunity to have a discussion with the founder of The Meditation Initiative, Jeffrey Zlotnik. Mr. Zlotnik's journey of self-healing offers an influential insight into the importance of mindful connection. He explained to me that as he grew up, he had many physical advantages within his environment to succeed; but physical resources could not fill the emptiness he felt was burdened within himself. It was not until later in his life, through Buddhist practices, that Mr. Zlotnik found his inner peace. Something from our discussion that will always stick with me was how Mr. Zlotnik explained his reasoning for beginning work in The Meditation Initiative. He stated that if these teachings could prevent anyone of any circumstance from experiencing the internal misery he had to endure up until his adult life, then his work would be worthwhile (Zlotnik). "Each individual deserves to understand who and how they are at the core of their being" are the exact words from Mr. Zlotnik that I continue to reflect on. Learning about Jeffrey Zlotnik's journey and what drove him to help teach others to guide their own, left me with a sense of community that I have never felt before and further cemented my belief in the power of self-connection.

The Meditation Initiative promotes the most important, and simultaneously the most overlooked, peace needed in our world: inner peace. Especially for those in high-stress environments, practicing mindfulness is vital. TMI's work is especially prudent because they strive to show that meditation is easily accessible to *anyone*. Teaching young children how to care for their emotional well being can create a

generation filled with connection, understanding, and unity. Offering free, guided meditations for those with academic, financial, health, and/or security stress can develop healthy coping mechanisms, and allows spirits feeling lost to build a community or find one within themselves.

I believe that the lack of mindfulness within the general population plays a considerable role in the divide, hate, and harsh societal standards that we as human beings have created and placed upon ourselves. If we were to all make the time to nurture our minds, to understand ourselves and one another, disorder and divide would not persist as it historically has and continues to now. Understanding, cooperation, individuality- and yet wholeness- would thrive; perhaps the very idea of world peace would not be so radical. The Meditation Initiative leads with the vision of a mindful, and therefore understanding and cooperative, humanity- which I believe could make all the difference.

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Works Cited

The Meditation Initiative. www.themeditationinitiative.org/. Accessed 2 December 2020.

Zlotnik, Jeffrey. Personal interview. 29 November 2020.