

Peace and Stilling Your Mind

By Father Peter Bowes

By the time the average person reaches 65, two million commercials have whizzed in front of their eyes. In the past 20 years, these commercials have gotten snappier and shorter, with scenes changing every second, the only pause occurring after three rapid changes to throw off the monotony. In the midst of this methodical formula, the barrage of sound bites and images form

tidy info-snacks for the mind, saturating it with information.

The over-stimulation of our senses creates an intolerance for silence, stillness and simplicity, three words that are necessary for everyone at some time in the day. Many busy, successful people in the world instinctually crave just a few moments away from the thousands of interruptions of each day. In the hustle of office meetings and telephone calls, traffic and accounting

reports, people feel a need for peace.

But our minds have become accustomed to distractions, and even those who do get away might find they have trouble relaxing because of their unruly minds. Who's in charge of your thinking?



Orange Exercise

Assess your ability to concentrate by trying this simple exercise. On a table, place an orange in front of you about 1-1/2 feet away. Examine it slowly, studying its surface, keeping your mind on it, and

do not let any thoughts or fantasies distract you for three minutes. Set a timer so you know when time is up.

Were there any thoughts not directly related to the orange? Did you find your mind wandering to other things? Did you see yourself looking at the orange and feeling a bit foolish? If so, then you were letting yourself be distracted and have an opportunity to strengthen your mind.

Either you are thinking exactly what you want to be thinking, or you are experiencing what someone else wants you to experience. The way to peace is to learn how to control your mind. Get it into shape, start training it and begin to teach it how to be still.

So how do you get a grip on your mind? You have to be firm and loving, setting aside at least five or 10 minutes a day to make it focus and think exactly what you want it to think. A good way to start this training is to observe something for a few minutes at a time. This will make your mind understand that it has a trainer. That trainer is you, and you have to mean business or it will not cooperate.

Stick to it with love and discipline, and know that each time you sit and focus, you

are getting stronger. Consider it exercise for your mind; your mental biceps and shoulders and abs are developing more stamina so you can be in charge of your thinking. In time, you will relish the quiet and the stillness of a disciplined mind. You will be thankful putting in the hard work. And in the space that your unruly mind used to govern, you will find the opportunity to truly meditate, and you will be filled with the most profound peace and life moving inside you that you have ever known.

Father Peter Bowes is a master teacher, priest, and co-director of a mystical Christian order with spiritual centers in 15 cities called the Centers of Light. EnlightenNext Magazine named Father Peter among the "Top 10 Internet Gurus," between Deepak Chopra and Eckhart Tolle. To learn more about Father Peter Bowes, visit www.seattle.centersoflight.org.

Father Peter Bowes says the way to peace is to learn how to control your mind.



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