

UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine

Dedicated to increasing knowledge about safe and effective complementary and integrative medicine approaches.

Rest, Renewal, and Contemplation

By Ronald Glick, MD, Rev. Gaea Thompson, Nivedita Gunturi, MD

Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand. Anyone may gather it and no limit is set. Everyone can reach this love through meditation, spirit of prayer, and sacrifice, by an intense inner life. Mother Teresa

We face unique challenges as a society. We're living in trying times, we're isolated, we're pulled in multiple directions, we're stressed, we don't have time to take care of ourselves, and we're disillusioned by the turmoil surrounding us.

In an age that we are increasingly reliant on technology, we are more likely to pay attention to our computers, smart phones, and cars than to ourselves. We diligently perform maintenance tasks and recharge our devices, even going so far as to reboot and restore them when it seems necessary. It is remarkable that we seldom care for ourselves with the same dedication and attention.

Learning to recharge and restore ourselves can be a valuable step towards improved physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. To this end, what can we learn from the world's religious and spiritual practices?

Contemplation is life itself, fully awake, fully active, and fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is gratitude for life, for awareness, and for being. It is a vivid realization of the fact that life and being in us proceed from an invisible, transcendent, and infinitely abundant Source. Thomas Merton

Be the silent watcher of your thoughts and behavior. You are beneath the thinker. You are the stillness beneath the mental noise. You are the love and joy beneath the pain. Eckhart Tolle

Daily practice: One consideration is taking time from each day for contemplation, meditation, or prayer. This is illustrated by the five daily prayers in Islam and the recitation of a blessing on arising and turning in at night in Judaism. Christian faiths encourage religious reading and devotionals. Similarly, in Buddhism, time is set aside for meditation and mindfulness. Recitation, such as the Rosary, Muslim prayer, or Hindu or Buddhist mantras, has a meditative effect that can be balancing

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and recharging^{1,2}. Similarly, devotionals and reading of scripture allow us to step outside of the constraints of day to day life, providing entry into another realm of thought and contemplation

There is a realm of time where the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord. Abraham Joshua Heschel

Cycles: Sabbath, when one takes time out for rest and spiritual reflection, emerges from the Hebrew number seven. It might seem selfish to take one day out of the week to rest and replenish our own tanks. But what if we flip that script? Rest may be the most loving thing we can do.

If we don't rest, then we will have nothing left to give others in our lives, the work we do for our employer will be impacted, and the people closest to us will be affected. When we care for ourselves, we are more ready to participate in the healing of the individuals and communities around us. This self-care and taking time to center ourselves is an essential part of healing and finding harmony.

We take time for reflection in the yearly cycle as well. The Days of Awe (between the Jewish New Year and Yom Kippur), and Ramadan are times when we take a closer look at our lives and make plans for the coming year. During these holy days, we make dietary changes or engage in fasting. Similarly, meditation and mindfulness are steps towards seeking stillness at our core, eliminating outside distractions as we turn our lens inward.

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads form one to another that creates something. Sandra Day O'Connor

Community: Attendance at weekly worship services and regular religious observance is associated with improved physical and mental health and greater longevity³⁻⁶. This can be hard to ferret out, as worship attendees are more likely to be married and less likely to have substance issues, also predictors for mental and physical health.

The religious or mind-body practice, by itself, likely confers health benefits. However, the salient factor may be the sense of community, connectedness, and common purpose. The flip side of that can be isolation.
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Anything that creates community, such as getting together for meditation, yoga, quilting, or bowling, may have a similar attraction. Given the increasing numbers of young adults identified as “nones”, referring to their lack of religious identity or affiliation, the major religions are exploring options to engage this group in non-traditional ways, commonly involving social activities. For older adults, class offerings such as Tai Chi and the Osher Lifelong Learning programs can help fill this need for connection.

Self-care is never a selfish act—it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer others. Anytime we can listen to true self and give the care it requires, we do it not only for ourselves, but for the many others whose lives we touch. Parker Palmer

Talk to yourself like you would to someone you love. Brené Brown

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. Mahatma Gandhi

A good heart is the source of all happiness, and we can all be good-hearted with some effort. But better still, is to have bodhichitta—a good heart imbued with wisdom. His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Compassion forms the essential bond between seeking God in meditation and all forms of social justice. For the more we are transformed in compassion, the more we are impelled to act with compassion toward others. James Finley

Compassion for ourselves and others: A core tenet of the world's religions is compassion. The proverb *charity begins at home* could just as well apply to compassion. The caring that we do for others nurtures ourselves and similarly, self-care allows us to bring our love and energy to others. The greatest challenge is to extend this compassion to others of differing backgrounds and views, particularly in contentious times.

The person who is always involved in good deeds experiences incessant divine happiness. The Rig Veda

Good deeds: “Random acts of kindness,” is highlighted in the column of that name in the Post-Gazette. This was evi-

dent a year ago as the community drew together following the Tree of Life Shootings. Following the funeral of Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, I (RG) was still wearing my kippah or head-covering at Chipotle. Behind me in line was a first responder and the woman ahead of us paid for both of our orders. The principle of service to man as service to God is a common theme across religious traditions, teaching us to see divinity all around us.

You cannot solve the problem from the same consciousness that created it. You must learn to see the world anew. Albert Einstein

If you see what needs to be repaired and how to repair it, then you have found a piece of the world that God has left for you to complete. But if you only see what is wrong and what is ugly in the world, then it is you yourself that needs repair. Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Tikkun Olam: Derived from Jewish scripture, is the ideal of healing or repairing the world. In scouts, we were on a 3-day hike when a severe storm set in, which would have swamped our meager tents (RG). We found an unoccupied unlocked cabin and the troop moved in for the night. In the morning, our scoutmasters had us clean the place neater than a drum. The owners would know that someone had slept there, by how clean we left it. There are many ills in the world and we each have the ability and power to leave the world a better place.

God does not cause our misfortunes. Some are caused by bad luck, some are caused by bad people, and some are simply an inevitable consequence of our being human and being mortal, living in a world of inflexible natural laws. The painful things that happen to us are not punishments for our misbehavior, nor are they in any way part of some grand design on God's part. Because the tragedy is not God's will, we need not feel hurt or betrayed by God when tragedy strikes. We can turn to Him for help in overcoming it, precisely because we can tell ourselves that God is as outraged by it as we are. Rabbi Harold S. Kushner (*When Bad Things Happen to Good People*)

No one knows he is fortunate until he becomes unfortunate, that's the way the world is. Chaim Potok, (*The Chosen*)

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Rest, Renewal, and Contemplation

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When things are going well in our lives, we may not make time for spirituality and religious practice. However, we all experience loss, hardship, and trials in our lives. Similar to eating a healthful diet or contributing to our retirement accounts; we're engaging in activities that will pay dividends in the future. Paying into our spiritual IRA puts us into a position to have perspective when these challenges occur.

There has been much interest in medicine and health psychology in behavioral change. Some conditions, such as addictions, are seen as all or none. For other health behaviors, such as diet or exercise, people may need to dip a toe in the water. The gains that we experience help motivate us to take further steps and maintain the changes over time. Similarly, unless there is a life-changing event, most of us don't wake up one morning and decide to embrace spiritual practice. Our greatest obstacle may be time. The same demands which make us stressed, may limit our resources and ability to carry out changes. We may find it easier to start with one small change and keep it going. After a week or two, we can check in with ourselves and see if we're ready to dip another toe.

We can include practices and incorporate changes in our outlook that become a part of who we are as people. These changes strengthen who we are, add to our resilience at times of stress, illness, or loss, and enhance both our own lives and the lives of those around us.

Rev. Thompson is a part of the UPMC Pastoral Care team and is the chaplain at Canterbury Place.

Dr. Gunturi is an internist, palliative care physician, and geriatrician who recently completed her training at UPMC and is practicing in the Chicago area.

References

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New Program Announcement:

Functional Nutrition for Autistic Spectrum Disorders

What is Functional Medicine?

This personalized approach addresses nutritional balance and immune health, with a focus on helping the gut to function optimally. As individuals with **Autism Spectrum Disorder** may experience nutritional deficiencies and dietary intolerance, this approach has the potential to make an impact on symptom management.

To learn more, go to [page 5!](#)

Integrative Medicine Conference

How to Live Longer & Better: Just Keep Moving

October 15, 2019

Cumberland Woods Village
700 Cumberland Woods Drive
Allison Park, PA 15101

Program Presenters

Movement Matters: Wellness Through a Purposeful Movement: by Ronald Glick
Lets Keep it Together: Fascia Matters: by David Lesondak
And more...

Contact Melissa Jones at 412-864-2091
or jonesms2@upmc.edu for more information.

“Stronger Together... Healing the Divide: A Social and Psychological Response to the Tree of Life Shooting”



Tuesday, November 5, 2019
Rodef Shalom
Congregation
4905 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Speakers

Jonathan Haidt, PhD; Kathleen Blee, PhD;
Deborah Brodine, MHA, MBA; Cantor Julie
Newman, MBA;
Karina Schumann, PhD; Rev. Dr. Vincent
Kolb; Clinical Chaplain Daniel Leger, RN,
BCC; Wasi Mohamed;
Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, MA, DSM, DD; Mayor
Bill Peduto; Rabbi Jonathan Perlman; Tim
Stevens

Visit: <https://upmc.asapconnected.com/CourseDetail.aspx?CourseId=208541> for more info

Continuing education credits are available

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FUNCTIONAL NUTRITION FOR AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

WHO IS KARL HOLTZER, MD, MS?



Dr. Holtzer is a pediatrician with over 25 years of experience and a specialist in functional medicine working at the Center for Integrative Medicine at UPMC Shadyside.

He is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and the Institute for Functional Medicine, making him one of the few pediatricians with this combination of skills and expertise. In addition to training through the Institute for Functional Medicine, he has a master's degree in Functional Nutrition from the University of Bridgeport.

Dr. Holtzer combines his knowledge of medicine and nutrition to identify and target biochemical abnormalities. He loves connecting with his patients and their families and providing a very patient-centered approach.

WHAT'S FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE?

This personalized approach addresses nutritional balance and immune health, with a focus on helping the gut to function optimally. As individuals with **Autism Spectrum Disorder** may experience nutritional deficiencies and dietary intolerance, this approach has the potential to make an impact on symptom management.

WHAT AGE RANGE DOES HE TREAT?

Ages 3-24

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

The initial visit is typically 1 to 1 ½ hours, which allows time to collect a comprehensive history from the patient and family. Diagnostic evaluation may include specialized testing. Treatment focuses on dietary changes and the use of nutritional supplements.

DOES INSURANCE COVER THIS SERVICE?

A grant fund can partially offset the cost of the consultation, testing, and treatment. Unfortunately, insurance does not cover this program.

FOR AN APPOINTMENT, PLEASE CONTACT:
UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine at (412) 623-3023
580 S Aiken Ave Suite 310
Pittsburgh, PA 15232

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UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We would like to thank all of our wonderful patients for bearing with us during our time of chaos.

For those of you who haven't been here in a while, we sustained a huge water pipe rupture in the suite above us during the weekend of 8/17/19. We came into work Monday 8/19 only to find the front desk reception area in total disarray with water drenched electronics and ceiling tile mush all over the floor, we also temporarily lost use of three administrative offices as well as one chiropractic office during the office rehab. To say it's been trying, would be an understatement, but we've been here everyday since working through it and around it!

We would also like to thank Property Management at UPMC and the crews that have been working day-in and day-out drying us out and putting us back together.

2019 Classes at the UPMC Center for Integrative Medicine

Tuesdays—ongoing	5:00-6:00	Positive Effects with Tai Chi	\$15	Jon Wilson
Saturday, Oct. 19	8:00-12:00	Yoga Nidra Workshop w/ brief Biofeedback	\$95	Alicja Walczak, MS, CRS
Tuesdays 9/24-11/12	12:00-1:45	Mindfulness-Based Anxiety Reduction	Ins.	Dinnie Goldring, LCSW
Wednesdays 9/11-10/30	6:30-9:30p	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction	\$325	Barbara Ivanko, LCSW
Thursdays 9/12-10/31	6:30-9:30p	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction	\$325	Kelly Beck, PhD

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