

What better way to spend a Tuesday evening than seeking love, peace and happiness? Abu Dhabi Week caught up with Inner Space meditation teacher Sona Bahri who explained how changing your thoughts can change your life



We were not entirely sure what to expect from our first experience of a Beginners Meditation class, maybe sitting cross legged on the floor, some rhythmic swaying perhaps?

Actually the class began with a talk by Sona about the benefits of meditation (while we sat comfortably on chairs!).

She explained that every time a person has a thought, a corresponding feeling is triggered - for example if you think about a loved family member then you will feel good or if you think about an unpleasant incident then you will feel bad and so on.

Sona explained, "Meditation is a means of taking control of life, so that we don't live our lives controlled by other people and situations that are going on around us. When we meditate, we connect with our inner thoughts and we learn to reprogramme our thoughts from negative to positive or from angry to peaceful."

The group was asked to bring to mind a situation that happened in the past, where another person made a mistake and we got hurt. Sona said, "That person made one mistake and how many mistakes did you make since then and who did you hurt?"

"Actually you hurt yourself by repeating that incident in your mind and going over it again and again, therefore affecting your thoughts, your happiness and your current outlook on life."

Sona suggested that we should really listen to our own thoughts this week, limit negative thinking and try to change those negative thoughts to be more uplifting. "For all the people in Abu Dhabi who are going crazy that their BlackBerry is not working this week, stop stressing because you can't change this, take a day off work, enjoy the silence," she said, laughing.

After the introductory talk, the group started the meditation. We were instructed to sit comfortably upright, relax, keep our eyes open and focus on a painting in front of us.

Apparently it is better to sit while meditating as it reduces the chances of nodding off and the best time to meditate is first thing in the morning.

The lights were dimmed and quiet soothing music played as Sona talked us through a ten-minute guided mediation. She gave us clear step-by-step instructions on what to do such as "Breathe in and out slowly. Keep your eyes open.

Try to feel what I tell you to feel. Imagine that your whole body is relaxed. Imagine that your arms and hands are totally relaxed" and so on.

The majority of the group said that they lost focus during the meditation at some point, which demonstrates how much our thoughts can be out of our control. According to our teacher, the good news is that with as little as ten minutes of meditation practice a day we, can become skilled at controlling our thoughts.

The other good news is that Inner Space is a non-profit business and the classes are free of charge. Inner Space is located beside the Shangri-La Hotel.

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