

Meditation and Mindfulness

If you have any inclination towards meditation, this is a great time of year to start. The mornings and evenings are dark and quiet. There is a stillness that hangs in the damp winter air, and a natural inclination towards quiet, solitude, silence.

So - why not get started now? There is no right or wrong way to do this. Just sitting is enough. Sit comfortably. Try bringing a soft focus to your breath. You can count exhalations, up to ten, and then begin over. When your mind wanders, just bring it back and begin with one again. Over and over again.

Meditation changes you subtly over time. It is a way to be present to this moment. You are open and receptive for the time of the meditation, and this spills over into your life. Your awareness grows, and you have a greater intimacy with life. You let more in. So if this sounds good to you, try starting while the stillness of winter makes it easier to settle in.

Stillness and Nurture

As we head deep into winter, I feel the urge for quiet and turning inward. Winter invites stillness and reflection. A time to clean up, prune, prepare. There is something very satisfying about following this natural rhythm. While sleep replenishes us on a daily basis, winter is part of our annual cycle of renewal.

What feeds your soul in a deep and delicious way? Sitting by a fire? Reading? Watching old movies? What needs attending to? Are there stacks that have accumulated that can be cleared out now? I long for simplicity in January. Do you?

What are the ways that you can nestle into the stillness of the season? How can the quiet of these long, dark nights be nurturing for you? Can you allow yourself to rest in this, tending to your dreams and visions for the new year? It can be a little raw and uncomfortable if you are not used to letting yourself sink into the pause. But hang with it. It is quite remarkable.

Just Do It

There is another side to the solitude of winter hibernation, and that is to tend to our basic structures. In the skeletal landscape, you can see the bare outlines more easily, more clearly. In your own life, it's time to repair those constructs that no longer work for you. What needs to be pruned away, what added?

Take advantage of the clarity and simplicity of the season to ask yourself: What needs to happen? If getting fit is one of your goals, at some point you need to just do it. Stop thinking about it, wishing it would happen, coming up with reasons -

and just do it. You can wait forever until the time is just right, or you can do it now. Make it just as important as the other activities of your life. Let it become part of your basic habits. Use discipline here as a way to free you up—so you *don't* have to always think about it. It is just part of what you do.

Learning The Language of the Body

Your body talks to you all the time – do you listen?

One way to practice listening is to increase your awareness of hunger, fullness and taste. Your body will tell you how much food you need. Begin by noticing hunger. How does it begin to make itself felt, and what is the progression? What is the felt sense – how do you know? At first you may not—many people only know what it feels like to be very hungry or very full. But as you continue to pay attention, the subtle beginnings will become increasingly clear. Like learning a foreign language, understanding takes form.

When you sit down to eat, notice how hungry you are then. Slow down and focus on the food itself. Notice the appearance and aroma. When you put it in your mouth, notice texture and flavor. Do you enjoy eating it? The really cool thing is that if you pay attention, you will notice that it stops tasting good once you have had enough. Slowing down and paying attention is the best portion guide.

Finally, notice your fullness. When you stop eating, what level of fullness are you at? What is the felt sense of fullness? How do you like it? Do you like some levels of fullness better than others? What works for you? Be at choice!

Three Months to Healthy Habits

Three Months to Healthy Habits is a program I designed to break through the barriers and old habits that stop people from feeling their best. I work with them one-on-one to establish a new structure of wellness tailored specifically to them. We focus on listening to the wisdom of the body, fine-tuning awareness, eating in a way that sustains energy, and making exercise/movement a way of life. I'm offering a New Year special! For those starting in January, the cost is 50% off—just \$99 a month! If this sounds good to you, please call me. I can give you the information you need to decide.



Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Health and Wellness Coaching and Nutrition Consulting. Discover the three core practices that contribute to your energy level and your state of well-being: Awareness, Eating to Sustain Energy, and Movement.

Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!



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