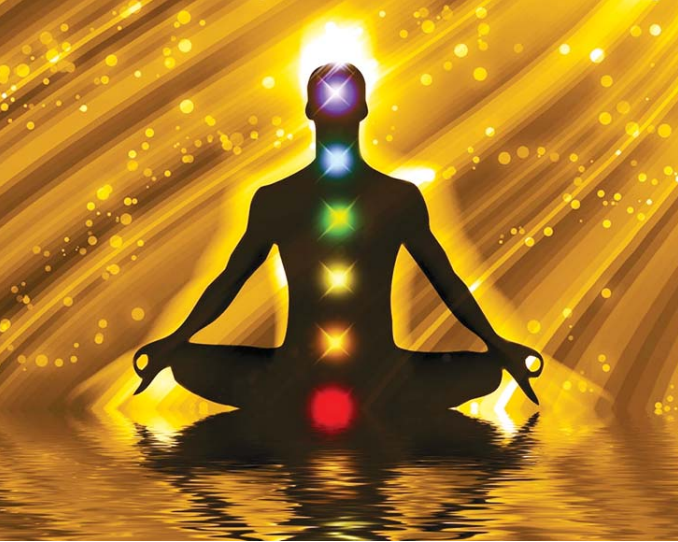


#LIFE

Meditation Works

8 WEEKS OF MEDITATION CAN MAKE YOUR BRAIN QUICKER



Just eight weeks of meditation studies can make your brain quicker, according to new research from Binghamton University, State University of New York.

Millions of people around the world seek mental clarity through meditation, most of them following or inspired by the centuries-old practices of Buddhism.

Anecdotal, those who meditate say it helps to calm their minds, recenter their thoughts and cut through the 'noise' to show what really matters. Scientifically, though, showing the effects of meditation on the human brain has proved to be tricky.

A new study from Binghamton University's Thomas J. Watson College of Engineering and Applied Science tracked how practicing meditation for just a couple of months changed the brain patterns of 10 students in the University's Scholars Program.

The seed for the research came from a casual chat between Assistant Professor Weiyang Dai and lecturer George Weinschenk, MA '01, PhD '07, both from the Department of Computer Science.

Weinschenk is a longtime meditation practitioner whose wife worked as an administrator at the Namgyal Monastery in Ithaca, which is the North American seat of the Dalai Lama's personal monastery.

"I developed very close friendships with several of the monks," he said. "We would hang out together, and I even received instruction from some of the Dalai Lama's teachers. I took classes there, I read a lot and I learned a three-year certificate in Buddhist studies."

Dai has studied brain mapping and biomedical image processing, and while earning her PhD at the University of Pittsburgh, she tracked Alzheimer's disease patients using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans.

"Yeah, meditation really can have a transformative effect on the brain," Weinschenk said. "She was a little skeptical, especially about whether such a short amount of time spent learning how to meditate, whether that would make any difference. She suggested we might be able to quantify such a thing with modern technology."

For the fall 2017 semester, Dai secured grant funding, and their collaboration began. Near the beginning of the semester, she took the partici-

pants to Cornell University for MRI scans of their brains. Weinschenk taught students how to meditate, told them to practice five times a week for 10 or 15 minutes, and asked them to keep a journal record of their practice. (The syllabus also included other lessons about the cultural transmissions of meditation and its applications for wellness.)

The results, recently published in the journal Scientific Reports, show that meditation training led to faster switching between the brain's two general states of consciousness.

One is called the default mode network, which is active when the brain is at wakeful rest and not focused on the outside world, such as during daydreaming and mind-wandering. The other is the dorsal attention network, which engages for attention-demanding tasks.

The findings of the study demonstrate that meditation can enhance the brain connection among and within these two brain networks, indicating the effect of meditation on fast switching between the mind wandering and focusing its attention as well as maintaining attention once in the attentive state.

"Tibetans have a term for that ease of switching between states, they call it mental pliancy, an ability that allows you to shape and mold your mind," Weinschenk said. "They also consider the goal of concentration one of the fundamental principles of self-growth."

Though once skeptical about the subject, "I'm pretty convinced about the scientific basis of meditation after doing this study," she added. "Maybe, I'll just go to George's class when he teaches it so that I can benefit, too!"



The Beauty Full Of Beans The Heady Kind



In 1940, Hedy met composer George Antheil at a dinner party. They started talking about music. Then about technology. Then about synchronized player pianos, how they could play in perfect synchronization using perforated paper rolls. And Hedy had an idea. What if you could use that same principle to synchronize radio frequencies? The transmitter and receiver could hop between 88 different frequencies (she chose 88 because that's the number of keys on a piano) in perfect sync, making the signal impossible to jam or intercept.



Hedy Lamarr was an Austrian-American actress and inventor who pioneered the technology that would one day form the basis for today's Wi-Fi, GPS, and Bluetooth communication systems. As a natural beauty seen widely on the big screen in films like *Samson and Delilah* and *White Cargo*, society has long ignored her inventive genius.

Lamarr was originally Hedwig Eva Kiesler, born in Vienna, Austria on November 9th, 1914 into a well-to-do Jewish family. An only child, Lamarr received a great deal of attention from her father, a bank director and curious man, who inspired her to look at the world with open eyes. He would often take her for long walks where he would discuss the inner-workings of different machines, like the printing press or street cars. These conversations guided Lamarr's thinking and

at only 5 years of age, she could be found taking apart and reassembling her music box to understand how the machine operated. Meanwhile, Lamarr's mother was a concert pianist and introduced her to the arts, placing her in both ballet and piano lessons from a young age. Lamarr's brilliant mind was ignored, and her beauty took center stage when she was discovered by director Max Reinhardt at age 16. She studied acting with Reinhardt in Berlin and was in her first small film role by 1930, in a German film called *Geld auf der Strasse* ('Money on the Street'). However, it wasn't until 1932 that Lamarr gained name recognition as an actress for her role in the controversial film, *Ecstasy*.

Hedy Kiesler was 19 years old and starring in 'Ecstasy,' a Czech film that featured cinema's first on-screen female orgasm. Scandalized conservatives called her a whore. Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels banned the film.

But Friedrich Mandl, one of Austria's wealthiest arms dealers, saw something else. He married her, and then imprisoned her.

Mandl was a fascist who sold weapons to Hitler and Mussolini. He locked Hedy in his castle, dressed her up for dinner parties with Nazi officials, and forbade her to act. She



was his trophy wife, his beautiful possession, forced to sit through endless business meetings where fascist arms dealers discussed military technology.

But here's what Mandl didn't realize: Hedy was listening. And Hedy was brilliant.

While her husband and his Nazi clients discussed torpedoes, radio frequencies, and military communications, Hedy Kiesler was absorbing every word. She understood the technology. She saw the problems. And she started thinking about solutions.

In 1937, Hedy escaped. She drugged her maid, stole her clothes, fled to Paris, and then to London. Louis B. Mayer, the head of MGM Studios, saw her and offered a contract. She sailed to America, changed her name to Hedy Lamarr, and became a Hollywood star. The world saw a stunning actress. Time magazine called her 'the most beautiful woman in the world.' She appeared in films like 'Algiers' and 'Samson and Delilah,' her face on movie posters across America.

But Hedy's brain was somewhere else. She was thinking about the Nazis. About the war. About the technology she'd heard discussed in Mandl's castle.

She knew that radio-controlled torpedoes could be jammed by the enemy, making them useless. If you transmitted a signal on a single frequency, the enemy could detect it and disrupt it. Torpedoes would veer off course. Ships would be safe.

But what if the signal kept changing frequencies? What if it 'hopped' from one frequency to another in a pattern only the transmitter and receiver knew?

The enemy couldn't jam what they couldn't predict. In 1940, Hedy met composer George Antheil at a dinner party. They started talking about music. Then about technology. Then about synchronized player pianos, how they could play in perfect synchronization using perforated paper rolls.

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#BEFORE TIME



secure military communications. By the 1980s and '90s, frequency hopping became the foundation for:

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2. Bluetooth
3. GPS
4. All modern wireless communication

Every time you connect to Wi-Fi, you're using technology Hedy Lamarr invented in 1941.

But for decades, she got no credit. No royalties. No recognition. In 1997, 56 years after her patent, the Electronic Frontier Foundation finally gave Hedy Lamarr the Pioneer Award, acknowledging her contribution to wireless technology.

She was 83 years old. She'd been ignored for more than half a century while her invention changed the world. When she received the award, Hedy said: "It's about time."

Hedy Lamarr died in 2000 at age 85. For most of her life, she was remembered as 'the beautiful actress.' Her technological genius was dismissed, forgotten, or credited to men.

Today, her face is on currency in Austria. Her patent is recognized as foundational to modern technology. And every smartphone, every GPS device, every Bluetooth connection exists because a woman the world dismissed as 'just a pretty face' was actually one of the most important

inventors of the 20th century. She escaped a Nazi arms dealer's castle. She became a Hollywood icon. And she invented technology that now runs the modern world.

But for most of her life, people only wanted to talk about how beautiful she was. That's not just sexism. That's theft. Every time you use Wi-Fi, remember: a Hollywood actress who the world called 'just a pretty face' made it possible.

And she did it while trying to defeat the Nazis who'd threatened her, imprisoned her, and tried to reduce her to a decoration in a castle.

Hedy Lamarr didn't just escape. She won. In honour of Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000), whose beauty the world celebrated but whose genius the world tried to erase.

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#ESTHER ABRAHAM

Our First Miss India A Jew

The Jewish Trailblazer Who Became India's First Miss India

Did you know that the very first Miss India was a Jewish woman? In 1947, the same year India gained independence, Esther

Victoria Abraham, better known by her stage name Pramila, made history by being crowned Miss India. But her story goes far beyond beauty pageants. She was an actress, producer, single mother, and a proud Indian Jew who broke barriers in an era when women's voices were still finding their place in public life.

Early Life and Background

Esther Abraham was born in 1916 in Calcutta (now Kolkata) into the Bene Israel Jewish community, one of the oldest Jewish groups in India. Her family later moved to Mumbai, where she began her career in the world of cinema.

At a time when acting was not considered a 'respectable' profession for women, especially from traditional families, Esther defied expectations. Her striking looks, intelligence, and fearless personality helped her rise to prominence in India's growing film industry.

Becoming Pramila: A Star of the Silver Screen

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