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May 1st to June 26th

Creekside Park in Winfield, IL

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"The secret to anti-aging" it's the "miracle exercise" for people seeking to avoid drugs, surgery, and expensive doctor bills.

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No need to register!



COMPLEMENTARY

Summer 2016 HEALTH & EXERCISE

Your reliable source for information on complementary forms of health and exercise

Volume 11, number 2

www.7StarsMA.com

Circulation: 300+

The Splendid Spiritual Practice of Silence

A few weeks after I graduated from high school, I left home and went away to a monastery. For the next eight years I lived the life of a monkô a solitary life of prayer, work, contemplation, fasting, and silence.

Within the walls of the monastery my life was not much different from the life of a monk of the Middle Ages. I was part of a community of about 60 monks, ranging in age from 18, like me, to 80.

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- 15 What 5 Minutes of Silence Can Do for Your Brain
- 16 The One Thing You're Not Doing That Will Completely Boost Your Focus

Full class schedules and more!

Why Silence Is So Good For Your Brain

Making time for silence can make you feel less stressed, more focused and more creative, according to science.

We live in a loud and distracting world, where silence is increasingly difficult to come by ô and that may be negatively affecting our health.

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FEATURES

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Complementary Health & Exercise

Summer 2016

Editor & publisher - John Robertson



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The Wisdom of Confucious

**"Silence is a true friend
who never betrays."**

Editor's Notebook

Welcome to our summer edition and some exciting news on new classes. Our first event of the summer is World T'ai Chi & Qigong Day at The Theosophical Society in Wheaton, IL followed by The Spring Gathering in Winfield, IL on April 30th. These are both free events, no experience is needed and a great opportunity to try T'ai Chi and Qigong from different teachers and hear mini-lectures from holistic practitioners.

Our Qigong in the Park series begins May 1st and runs to June 26th (9 weeks) at Creekside Park in Winfield. No registration is necessary, just turn up! This is a great class to bring family and friends to that have wanted to try T'ai Chi and Qigong, beginners are especially welcome!

We will be co-hosting a Quiet Reflection & Meditation Retreat at relax4Life in Barrington. Come and enjoy a day of quiet reflection, meditation and movement, in a beautiful and sacred indoor and outdoor space, away from the chaos of the world. Take this opportunity to get away from the modern world and enjoy peace, quiet, and an opportunity to recharge and rejuvenate through a variety of meditative and reflective experiences.

We have focused this issue on the theme of silence to help you prepare for our retreat. Many people say they would have difficulty remaining quiet for a whole day, hopefully the articles inside will help. Register up for the retreat before June 31st save \$25 and stay for the Crystal Bowl Sound Meditation performance that evening from 8:00pm-9:30pm and save a further \$25!

John Robertson

*"He lives most life whoever
breathes most air"*

T'ai Chi for Health & Qigong teacher training

Learn the foundations of Qigong and T'ai Chi and how to teach the core curriculum to allow you to successfully facilitate Qigong & T'ai Chi for Health classes.

Over the yearlong program we will delve into the history, philosophy and exercises of Qigong, learning how to explain and teach them.

Application forms, dates, tuition and more information is available on our website

www.7StarsMA.com/Students/TeacherTraining.html

**Program begins
September 2016**



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The Lighthouse Center,
10 S 165 Church Street,
Winfield, IL 60190

John@7StarsMA.com



630-229-4434



Be guided to a higher quality of life
by the wisdom of the ancients

10 Benefits From 10 Days Of Silence & 100 Hours Of Meditation

By Conor O'Shea

I completed my second 10-day Vipassana retreat at the beginning of October. Vipassana is a form of meditation originated in India around the time of the Buddha. It is now one of the most widely practiced forms of meditation in the world with over 200 centers worldwide delivered in 55 different languages. The recently deceased S.N. Goenka teaches the meditation technique using video recordings.

Why endure 10 days of complete silence and solitude from the outside world? There has been a growing body of research about the many benefits of developing a consistent meditation practice.

Here are the 10 major benefits I have found after completing two 10 day retreats in the past year.

1. Increased awareness

If you are not aware, change is impossible. At retreats, you wake at 4 a.m. and lights out is at 10 p.m. These are long days with plenty of time for self-reflection. You start to become more aware of the positive and negative sides to your personality and life. Having time set aside each day gives you a chance for this reflection. With this improved awareness I feel much more in tune with my emotions.

2. Remaining equanimous

This is the main teaching of Vipassana meditation. Remaining equanimous no matter what you experience. Equanimity is accepting all outcomes be it good or bad. So when you have a nice enjoyable experience you don't cling or become attached to. Likewise, with bad experiences, you do not avert them. Accept everything as it is remaining equanimous.

3. Impermanence

Everything you know including yourself will eventually grow old and die. Everything. All of the people in your life and all of your possessions. During the 10 days you are consistently reminded of this. Realizing that your life is in a constant flux allows you to accept things as they are as opposed to clinging to the people and things in your life. It also makes difficult periods easier as you know that they will end as well.

4. Detox from life

During the ten days you observe noble silence. You are not allowed any electronic devices, reading, or

writing material. This is such a strange and at times difficult practice as we spent our whole lives in a constant state of stimulation. Eliminating these distractions keeps all your concentration on your meditation practice. It also helps you slow down the pace of your thoughts as you aren't digesting any new material. This lack of extra stimuli allows for a deeper focus on meditation and a much better detox.

5. Happiness

"There is only one place to find real peace, real harmony. That place is within" - S.N. Goenka

The range of emotions I went through during the ten days was like a condensed version of an entire year in the outside world. There are many challenges. The pain in your knees and hips from the long periods of sitting. The hours of endless silence. As the days move on you begin to realize how many awesome things you have in your life. Living like a monk you see all of the things you take for granted each day. Not being able to talk reminds you of all the great friends and family you have. In future you won't be on your phone when you've arranged to catch up with a friend. The long periods of silence allow you to appreciate all of the great people and things you have in your life.

6. Learning to Fail

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." - Robert F. Kennedy

With meditation you are constantly failing. The goal is to concentrate the mind by focusing on the breath. This helps quiet the mind but you are never going to go completely without thoughts, unless you reach enlightenment and this state is still impermanent. Constantly practicing daily throughout these failures builds willpower and perseverance. It makes you comfortable with failure which bleeds into other parts of your life.

7. Calmer

Goenka states in his lectures that the 10 days is a surgical procedure of the mind. During the 10 days I experienced minimal external stressors. Each day we were trained how to remain equanimous when differ-

ent situations arose. This practice has helped me to observe stressful situations without reacting to them in an emotional way.

8. Broader perspective

One of the stories told at the retreat is the story of 6 blind men who all touch a different part of an elephant:

Six blind men were asked to determine what an elephant looked like by feeling different parts of the elephant's body. The blind man who feels a leg says the elephant is like a pillar; the one who feels the tail says the elephant is like a rope; the one who feels the trunk says the elephant is like a tree branch; the one who feels the ear says the elephant is like a hand fan; the one who feels the belly says the elephant is like a wall; and the one who feels the tusk says the elephant is like a solid pipe.

A king explains to them:

All of you are right. The reason every one of you is telling it differently is because each one of you touched the different part of the elephant. So, actually the elephant has all the features you mentioned.

The practice of meditation gives us a broader perspective on situations. Instead of looking outwards at all of the problems effecting yourself you start to see that it is all a manifestation of your own thoughts. You begin to take responsibility for your own life.

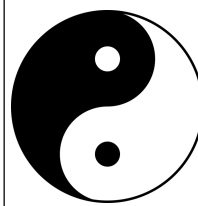
9. Improved efficiency with time

During the retreat I learned for the first time in my life how to slow down and listen. Up until the point my mind was allways crammed with thoughts of what I should be doing. After this experience I realized that there is so much time in the day but it was how I was using my time that was the problem. I now focus on 2-3 important tasks and forget about everything else. Being more present allows for a deeper concentration when carrying out tasks. All of this results in completing tasks faster and more efficiently.

10. Improved mobility

Sitting cross legged for 10 hours a day is painful. The first few days will be agony for most of you. In the last 2 days my hips started to open as my body got used to sitting. Sitting cross legged with your spine straight, tail bone and knees in contact with the ground puts you in a perfect position that allows you to sit more comfortably for longer.

If you give yourself the time and solitude you need to ask the important questions you will be rewarded with a greater understanding of who you are and what it is you want from life.



Qigong

The inner health of the body is just as important as the outer health; through this mind-body practice you can improve your health & longevity, boost your immune system and reduce stress. The exercises are effective and easy to learn. Students may choose to sit or stand as needed; making this class suitable for all ages and abilities.

Tuesdays 12:30pm-1:30pm
May 10th & July 5th



185 Spring Avenue,
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

630-858-2462

T'ai Chi Express

Fridays at 8:30am:
May 13th & July 8th

3 S 260 Warren Ave,
Warrenville, IL 60555

630 393 7279



Using the 8 Step T'ai Chi form; a shorter more compact version of the 24 posture form taught in our T'ai Chi Chuan classes

It requires less time & space and is great for those without the room to practice the 24 form, or those with busy lives who still want the all the benefits of T'ai Chi



Say goodbye to antacids

Do you suffer from heartburn, acid reflux, indigestion, GERD or other digestive issues?

Would you prefer to deal with the cause rather than masking the symptoms with medication?

Learn exercises that have the potential to deal with problems at the root cause & to eliminate them; imagine eating your meals without the threat of harmful discomfort hanging over you.

May 12th ~ 6:00 - 9:00pm



630 595 9333

111 E. Foster Avenue, Wood Dale, IL 60191

Tips for Silence Habits

Tuesday 5th of April 2016

Numerous studies have linked unwanted sound to increased levels of stress.

Even low-level noise has been associated with increased aggression and other mental health problems, as well as poor sleep, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Janet Luhrs, pioneer of the Simplicity Movement, offers the following tips for increasing moments of silence in your daily life so that you will feel better and be healthier:

Start your day with silence. Before running headlong into another day, do something relaxing for twelve minutes when you wake up. That could be stretching, reading something inspirational, or meditating. Hormone levels are highest when you first get out of bed. Most people have coffee and turn on CNN. That's the worst thing you can do.

Eat at a table, without TV or reading. Mindful eating helps you enjoy your food more, prevents overeating because you are tuned in to your body's satiety signals, and allows your body to metabolize food more efficiently.

Try driving in silence. The car is a wonderful place to get in touch with your thoughts and be with yourself. Silence is rejuvenating.

Create a silence retreat at home. Set aside an evening at home when you will not talk. Turn the ringer off the phone and don't answer it; turn off the TV. Don't run any extra machines. If you have a cooperative family, try to do it together, or trade nights with your spouse taking the kids out to dinner and a movie.

Practice silent exercise. When you exercise, try it without the iPod and magazines. If possible, exercise outdoors.

Silence helps you pay attention to everything your body is doing - your breathing, your muscles, your posture. Silence helps you listen to the healthy signals your body is giving you - to slow down, to go faster, to straighten up.

Don't let stress stress you out!

Stress could be called the plague of the 21st century; it is said to be responsible for around 85% of Doctors visits

Learn simple, effective ways to reduce both chronic and acute stress

May 25th ~ 6:00 - 9:00pm

Sunset Knoll Recreation Centre
820 S. Finley Road, Lombard

630 620 7322





Learn to use your own healing abilities

Reiki

We all have innate healing abilities. In this class you will learn to tap into that inner wisdom; and using the natural energy of the universe help yourself and your family heal.

This energy can help you to re-establish balance and harmony on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual planes so that the natural function of your body is restored and its ability to heal itself is activated.

This is a hands-on workshop under the guidance of a Reiki Master Teacher and Qigong Instructor.



Register early ~ class is limited to 6 participants!

Level 1

Sunday, September 18th
9:00am - 5:00pm

Our Reiki Student course teaches you all the basic principles of Reiki: Natural Energy Healing!

Helping you to harness the energy of the universe

All for only \$157!

Level 2

Sunday, October 23rd
9:00am - 5:00pm

Take your practice to a higher level and begin to work with the public! Enroll in our Reiki Practitioner course (1 & 2) for only \$297 ~ save \$57! Plus! get a laminated hand position and a symbols chart free!

Level 3

Sunday, November 20th
9:00am - 5:00pm

Enroll in our Reiki Master Practitioner course (1, 2 & 3) for only \$497 ~ get a laminated hand position chart, 2 laminated symbols charts, a session CD, & a Reiki for Dummies book free ~ a total saving of \$158!



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The Lighthouse Center, 0 S 165 Church Street, Winfield

Call 630 229 4434 or register online at:

www.7StarsMA.com/Metaphysicsclasses/Reiki.html



Silence is golden. It can also drive you crazy.

Michael Hedrick



It is nearly impossible to find a state of true silence. But some people go out of their way to find it.

Consider this 2012 New York Times article, called "Whisper of the Wild," about a group of scientists led by Davyd Betchkal. In 2006, Betchkal decided to trudge deep into the woods in an attempt to record 60 days' worth of pure silence, or more correctly, natural sound. The team sought a quiet undisturbed by the chafing of nylon snow pants, the crunch of snow underfoot, or even plane engines miles away. They wanted a silence so pure that it proved quite elusive. By the time the article was published six years later, the team had amassed a mere 36 days worth of silent recordings — barely half of the original goal.

But what is it about the mysterious lack of audible stimulation that seems so appealing in the first place? Perhaps it's the promise of being alone with our thoughts, fully and completely, without the distraction of external noise. It seems fitting, in a way, that when we revere people we've lost, it's customary to include a moment of silence. It forces us to think about them.

Silence can certainly be overrated though. After all, sound plays a critical role in our very existence. An article by Benedikt Grothe called "How Evolution Has Opened Our Ears" for the Max Planck Institute for Neurobiology suggests that hearing evolved as a way for us to protect ourselves from danger:

In insects, hearing probably arose in connection with communication within the species — generally with the selection and spatial localization of a mating partner. Hearing not linked to reproduction tends to be the exception here. For example, some insects can hear bat echolocation calls and attempt to escape from them. Certain parasitic flies find their hosts by recognizing and localizing the hosts' communication sounds. Whether hearing in vertebrates was developed primarily to detect prey and avoid

predators or as part of a communication system, we do not know — not least because our concept of the evolution of hearing is still changing.

Hearing helps you detect threats. Even animals that are "deaf" — insects, snakes, and fish, for example — have other mechanisms to sense vibrations, essentially allowing them to "hear" with their bodies.

If the ability to hear sound is such an evolutionary necessity, why do we crave a mute button? Think of it this way: When we listen to our environment, we are constantly taking in information and analyzing it to judge whether something is a danger, whether or not our native fight or flight response should take hold. Silence means we are safe. It means we can relax.

Needless to say, a dearth of sound can be troubling. The Daily Mail recently published an article on the quietest place on Earth: The Anechoic Chamber at Orfield Laboratories in Minneapolis. The room blocks 99 percent of all external noise using 3.3 feet of thick fiberglass, acoustic wedges, double walls of insulated steel, and a foot of concrete.

No one has been able to stay in the room for more than 45 minutes, citing hallucinations from the quiet. Steven Orfield, the company's founder, told the Daily Mail: "When it's quiet, ears will adapt. The quieter the room, the more things you hear. You'll hear your heart beating, sometimes you can hear your lungs, hear your stomach gurgling loudly. In the anechoic chamber, you become the sound." Silence is suddenly not a comfort — it's terrifying.

And yet, there still exists an allure to silence, a desire to block out the noise that bombards us, day in, day out. It's a desire to focus on our own thoughts and become aware of the things that are going on inside our own heads. Sound, like any other facet of the human experience, is best when taken in moderation.

Tai Chi Chuan

"the secret to anti-aging" it's the
"miracle exercise" for people seeking
to avoid drugs, surgery, and expensive
doctor bills.

Elmhurst

Courts Plus, 186 S. West Avenue,
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Beginner students meet every
Thursday 12:30-1:30pm

Continuing students meet every
Thursday 12:30-2:00pm

classes start:
May 12th & July 7th

Call: 630 833 5064

Lombard

Sunset Knoll Recreation Centre
820 S. Finley Road,
Lombard, IL 60148

Beginner students meet every
Monday 5:00-6:00pm

Continuing students meet every
Monday 6:00-7:00pm

classes start:
May 2nd & July 11th

Call: 630 620 7322



Roselle

Clauss Recreation Center
555 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue,
Roselle, IL 60172

Beginner students meet every
Thursday 9:00-10:00am

Continuing students meet every
Thursday 9:00-10:30am

classes start:
May 12th & July 7th

Call: 630 894 4200

Villa Park

Iowa Community Centre
338 N. Iowa Avenue,
Villa Park, IL 60181

Beginner students meet every
Tuesday 2:00-3:00pm

Continuing students meet every

classes start:
Tuesday 2:00-3:30pm
May 10th & July 5th

Call: 630 834 8970

The Splendid Spiritual Practice of Silence

A former monk shares insights from a year of solitary prayer and contemplation

The monastery was self-sufficient. We grew our own food in the fields around the monastery, which was in a remote farming area in the American Midwest. Our life was the simplest imaginable. We wore plain clothing, ate humble meals, and, at night, retired to small individual rooms that were furnished only with bed, sink, desk, and chair.

Apart from the ‘World’

The first year of my life as a monk was a time of training and instruction, preparing me to live outside the monastery and teach in the Brothers’ schools. Called the novitiate or canonical year — from canon, or Catholic Church law — it was a period of intense concentration on how to live as a monk. We studied the Rule of Saint Benedict, formulated more than a millennium ago as a blueprint for the monastic life. And we practiced silence.

When I tell people that I spent an entire year in silence, their expressions usually stop cold, waiting for their minds to catch up with the novel information. Their eyes seem to ask: How can anyone live in silence for a year? Even if it were possible to live in silence, why would anyone want to do it?

Being silent was not difficult for me. Perhaps the biggest surprise was that once I went into the silence, I was not interested, most of the time, in speaking. Also, when no one is speaking, it is much easier to be quiet than if some people are speaking and others are not. In our monastery, everyone lived under the rule of silence.

As for why we wanted to be silent, that relates to the nature of monastic life itself, which is to be apart from the world and to have an opportunity for reflection and meditation, activities that are *ōinnerō* and

require quiet. It would be absurd to try to follow a contemplative path and also to allow noise into one’s realm. The two do not go together.

The silence we lived in the monastery had both an interior and an exterior character. Silence from the inside meant not talking, in the first place, but also something deeper: it had to do with quieting the mind, not being busy inside. Inner silence also carried the idea of refraining from judgment and staying away from thinking about the past and the future. Being silent within was really being at once absent from the world of busy-ness and at the same time present in the moment.

Silence on the outside had to do with keeping away anything that did not foster inner silence. So, no radio or television or newspapers or magazines found their way behind the walls of the monastery. There were no computers in those days — and therefore no Internet, no email, no Facebook, no Twitter; if there had been computers, they would not have been part of our monastery.

Natural sounds (birds, animals, the wind in the trees) were considered part of the silence, actually fostering contemplation in the spirit of silence. We were discouraged from making loud noises ourselves — even while working — because that would have disturbed that same spirit of silence, even if we were not speaking.

What happens when one is silent for a long period? The outer noise goes first, and then the inner noise starts to evaporate. Soon, quiet reigns everywhere, it seems. Time slows to a crawl. Sound becomes a curiosity — natural sounds, especially, like the flow of water or the rustle and sway of tall grass, become oc-

Qi Gong in the Park

Join us every Sunday morning in May & June at 10:00am in Winfield's Creekside Park to start your week off the right way!

All the classes will include:

- Warm-ups
 - 12 points tapping
 - Hand-swinging &
 - Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi
- and each week we will include other Tai Chi & Qi Gong exercises



Qi Gong is "the secret to anti-aging" it is the "miracle exercise" for people seeking to avoid drugs, surgery, and expensive doctor bills.

Sunday, May 1st to June 26th 10-11:30am

Creekside Park, 0 S 211 Winfield Road, Winfield, IL



All for just \$12 drop in per class
or \$97 for the complete series!

www.7StarsMA.com/TaiChiClasses/QiGong.html



Discover the secrets of Chinese Health Balls

Their use can reduce your risk of arthritis, tendonitis, carpal tunnel, rheumatism, repetitive stress injury, dementia & Alzheimer's.

They can help reduce stress, aid relaxation and help prolong life.

May 1st ~ 1:00-4:00pm

50 Secrets



Of the world's



longest living



people

May 8th ~ 1:00-4:00pm

Each
class
just
\$30!

Pre-register for all
8 classes for just \$200!

All classes require a minimum of 5 students to run.

8 Step T'ai Chi

The 8 Step Tai Chi form is a shorter more 'compact' version of the 24 posture Tai Chi Chuan form.

All the movements will be familiar to those practicing the 24 posture form; however this version requires less time and space, and is ideal for people with busy lives!

You can expect to improve health, gain a calm stress-free mind and a flexible body. The 8 Step Tai Chi will also gently stimulate the internal organs, exercise the body, calm the nervous system and mobilize the joints.

June 5th ~ 1:00-4:00pm

The Six Healing Sounds

It is said that there is one way of drawing the breath in and six ways of expelling breath out. The six ways of expelling the breath are sounds which resonate with specific organs.

Practice of the Healing Sounds promotes optimal organ health, emotional balance, and helps us prevent illness. The sounds are so simple and easy to perform that they seem almost too good to be true, they work the first time, every time.

Once learnt the sounds can be easily used throughout the day, taking only a minute or two to help maintain health and vitality.

June 12th ~ 1:00-4:00pm



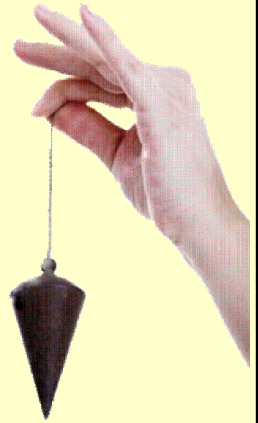
Eight Pieces of Brocade

Practiced by martial artists, Traditional Chinese Doctors & ordinary people for 1,000 years; learn one of the most important Qigong exercise systems available today.

May 15th ~ 1:00-4:00pm

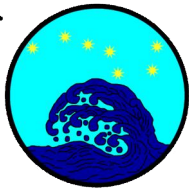
The Magic of the Pendulum

Learn to communicate with the depths of your subconscious mind, tune into your intuition and tap the unlimited potential of your own mind.



May 29th 1:00-4:00pm

七星武道



All classes are held at The Lighthouse Center
0 S 165 Church Street, in Winfield
Call 630 229 4434

The Tangram: a simple puzzle or not?

How can you rearrange seven simple geometric pieces into extraordinary and puzzling challenges? Designed to challenge the mind into learning and problem solving, the Tangram has entertained and mystified people for hundreds of years. 7 simple pieces that can be arranged into a multitude of shapes. Its striking simplicity makes it accessible to everyone.



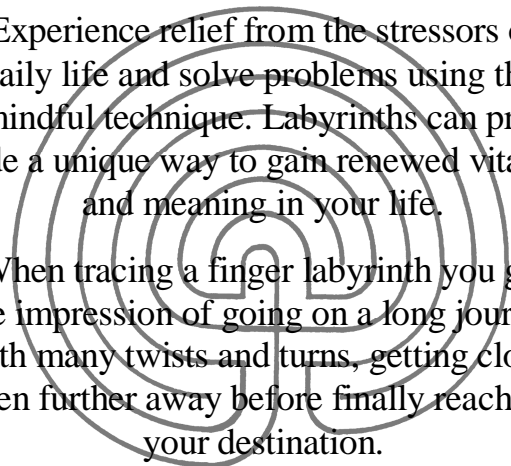
June 19th ~ 1:00-4:00pm

Finger Labyrinths:

A Journey to the Center of the Self

Experience relief from the stressors of daily life and solve problems using this mindful technique. Labyrinths can provide a unique way to gain renewed vitality and meaning in your life.

When tracing a finger labyrinth you get the impression of going on a long journey with many twists and turns, getting closer then further away before finally reaching your destination.



June 26th ~ 1:00-4:00pm

The Five Animal Frolics

July 31st

10:00am-3:30pm

This is oldest written exercise program for preventive medicine practiced today; being a sequence of natural movements and postures based on the movement of animals.

They were developed by a physician around 200AD, and have been around so long because they are a fun and effective method of helping people of all ages and abilities to develop strong, healthy bodies.

The five animals are the fierce and untamed tiger, the graceful deer, the steady and lumbering bear, the agile monkey and the flying crane. Practicing these exercises helps to strengthen the internal organs, fortify the body, increase balance and promote well being.



五禽戏

Wǔ Qín Xì

**The Five Animal
Frolics**

Just \$60!

Register before July 15th
and receive a free workbook
- a \$12 bonus!

[http://7starsma.com/
orientalwisdomclasses/
animalfrolics.html](http://7starsma.com/orientalwisdomclasses/animalfrolics.html)

casions for deeper listening and lead to a most profound inner calm.

The Letter and the Spirit of Silence

During the time I spent living in monastic silence, I learned to distinguish between the letter and the spirit of silence.

The letter of silence is just that: not speaking and not disturbing the silence around you in any way. Practicing the letter of silence, you tread as lightly as possible, do not utter a word or any other sound, do not use sign language or body language, and even avoid reading written communication, except perhaps, on occasion, inspirational articles or books.

The letter of silence has both an interior and an exterior character. On the outside, you are careful not only to remain silent but also to avoid intruding on the silence of others— or, for that matter, of the “silence” of nature. On the inside, you stay away from “noisy” or useless thoughts. Useless thinking is the running of interior mental tapes that are set in the past or in the future.

The spirit of silence poses a slightly different way of regarding being silent. When you practice the spirit of silence, you will actually find yourself speaking when it is -necessary. For instance, you have decided to be in silence for an afternoon. You have turned off the -television and the radio, you have switched off the telephone ringer and the computer, and you have closed down all the other noise--generating appliances in the house. You sit down with an inspirational book. Then the doorbell rings unexpectedly— the mailman is delivering a package. Practicing the spirit of silence, you go to the door, accept the package gracefully, and say, “Thank you.” You have not broken your silence. In fact, you have enhanced it with a simple expression of gratitude.

In the monastery, the spirit of silence was an important concept to learn. When I took the vow of silence for a year, it meant that I would strive to dwell in the interior world of the spirit as much as possible. But it did not mean that I would not speak at all. All the monks spoke during open prayer, for example. We also spoke in public during classes we took on living the monastic life, and in private to our spiritual counselor.

If we needed to explain something about a particular task, we spoke briefly and quietly; if we had ques-

tions about how to perform a certain duty, we spoke. Once during my year of silence I needed to see a dentist. I spoke to him about my toothache— and did not break the spirit of silence.

Living in the spirit of silence allowed me to dwell constantly in a silent place, even if words needed to be exchanged.

Your Inner Cloister

The peace that silence brought to me then— and continues to bring to me now, when I practice it— is hard to describe. Being in silence is feeling the bliss of balance and completion on an exceedingly high level. Silence grounds me and gives me serenity and mental clarity.

I take part of each day now to dwell in silence. You can do this, too. You can create your own quiet inner monastery cloister. If you have the opportunity to practice an hour of silence sometime during the day, you may want to try it and see how it makes a difference for you. Like the monks of the Middle Ages who lived the vow of silence, you may find that spiritual treasures you had not imagined will be revealed to you— not only in your silent time, but all through the day.

An Hour of Silence Every Day

The greatest lesson I learned in the monastery was how to get in touch with the spiritual center of myself. Deep within each of us is a great well of health, abundance, knowledge, guidance. When we enter the silence and stay in the silence, we come into direct contact with that sacred well. In that place dwells our True and Higher Self: It is that part of us that exists and operates in a place where there is no time— no past, no future, only the present moment. It is the part of us that is connected to all of consciousness. It holds the answers to all our questions, the solutions to all our problems.

This spiritual center is active in us always. It will communicate with us if we are still enough to hear its gentle voice. One way to approach silence as a spiritual practice is to remain in a listening mode during our silent time. The still, small voice within may not arise in the form of words— it may come in an idea you had never thought of before or in the image of something or someone. Often the voice will not come to you during the silence, but afterward and when you least expect it. It may arise in the middle of a conver-

Continued on page 17:

Tai Chi for Health

Tai Chi for Health is a gentle, beautiful and flowing exercise routine that is a joy to do.

Energizing and deeply relaxing; it brings a stronger immune system, better balance, health and vitality to all who practice it.

Elmhurst

The Abbey Senior Center
407 W. St. Charles Road,
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Wednesday at 11:15am

classes start:
May 11th & June 29th

Call: 630 993-8193



Wood Dale

Wood Dale Recreation Complex,
111 E. Foster Avenue,
Wood Dale, IL 60191

Thursday at 11:00am

classes start:
May 12th & July 7th

Call: 630 595 9333

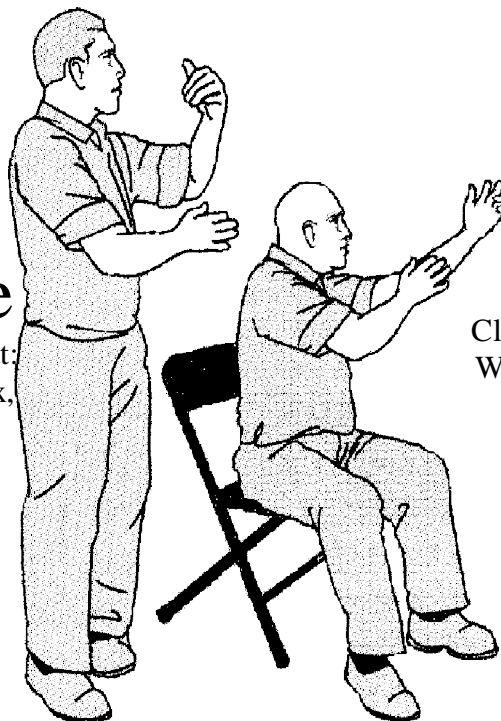
Bloomingtondale

Classes are held in Wood Dale at:
Wood Dale Recreation Complex,
111 E. Foster Avenue,
Wood Dale, IL 60191

Thursday at 11:00am

classes start:
May 12th & July 7th

Call: 630 595 9333



Bensenville

Classes are held in Wood Dale at:
Wood Dale Recreation Complex,
111 E. Foster Avenue,
Wood Dale, IL 60191

Thursday at 11:00am

classes start:
May 12th & July 7th

Call: 630 595 9333



Why Silence Is So Good For Your Brain

In a loud and distracting world, finding pockets of stillness can benefit your brain and body. Here are four science-backed reasons why.
Carolyn Gregoire Senior Writer, The Huffington Post

Continued from page 1:

In fact, a 2011 World Health Organization report called noise pollution a "modern plague," concluding that "there is overwhelming evidence that exposure to environmental noise has adverse effects on the health of the population."

We're constantly filling our ears with music, TV and radio news, podcasts and, of course, the multitude of sounds that we create non-stop in our own heads. Think about it: How many moments each day do you spend in total silence? The answer is probably very few.

As our internal and external environments become louder and louder, more people are beginning to seek out silence, whether through a practice of sitting quietly for 10 minutes every morning or heading off to a 10-day silent retreat.

Inspired to go find some peace and quiet? Here are four science-backed ways that silence is good for your brain — and how making time for it can make you feel less stressed, more focused and more creative.

1. Silence relieves stress and tension.

Florence Nightingale, the 19th century British nurse and social activist, once wrote that "Unnecessary noise is the most cruel absence of care that can be inflicted on sick or well." Nightingale argued that needless sounds could cause distress, sleep loss and alarm for recovering patients.

It turns out that noise pollution has been found to lead to high blood pressure and heart attacks, as well as



impairing hearing and overall health. Loud noises raise stress levels by activating the brain's amygdala and causing the release of the stress hormone cortisol, according to research.

An unpublished 2004 paper by environmental psychologist Dr. Craig Zimring suggests that higher noise levels in neonatal

intensive care units led to elevated blood pressure, increased heart rates and disrupted patient sleep patterns.

Just as too much noise can cause stress and tension, research has found that silence has the opposite effect, releasing tension in the brain and body.

A 2006 study published in the journal *Heart* found two minutes of silence to be more relaxing than listening to "relaxing" music, based on changes in blood pressure and blood circulation in the brain.

2. Silence replenishes our mental resources.

In our everyday lives, sensory input is being thrown at us from every angle. When we can finally get away from these sonic disruptions, our brain's attention centers have the opportunity to restore themselves.

The ceaseless attentional demands of modern life put a significant burden on the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which is involved in high-order thinking, decision-making and problem-solving.

As a result, our attentional resources become drained. When those attention resources are depleted, we become distracted and mentally fatigued, and may

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The Six Healing Sounds



It is said that there is one way of drawing breath in and six ways of expelling breath out. The six ways of expelling the breath are represented by sounds which resonate with specific organs.

Practice of the Healing Sounds promotes optimal organ health, emotional balance, and helps us prevent illness. The sounds are so simple and easy to perform that they seem almost too good to be true, they work the first time, every time.

Once learnt the sounds can be easily used throughout the day, taking only a minute or two to help maintain health and vitality.

Sunday, September 25th
10:00am - 3:30pm

Learn how to use the sounds to promote health and emotional wellbeing plus exercises that enhance their power!



The Lighthouse Center,
0 S 165 Church Street,
Winfield, IL 60190
630 229 4434



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struggle to focus, solve problems and come up with new ideas.

But according to attention restoration theory, the brain can restore its finite cognitive resources when we're in environments with lower levels of sensory input than usual. In silence – for instance, the quiet stillness you find when walking alone in nature – the brain can let down its sensory guard, so to speak.

3. In silence, we can tap into the brain's default mode network.

The default mode network of the brain is activated when we engage in what scientists refer to as "self-generated cognition," such as daydreaming, meditating, fantasizing about the future or just letting our minds wander.

When the brain is idle and disengaged from external stimuli, we can finally tap into our inner stream of thoughts, emotions, memories and ideas. Engaging this network helps us to make meaning out of our experiences, empathize with others, be more creative and reflect on our own mental and emotional states.

In order to do this, it's necessary to break away from the distractions that keep us lingering on the shallow surfaces of the mind. Silence is one way of getting there.

Default mode activity helps us think deeply and creatively. As Herman Melville once wrote, "All profound things and emotions of things are preceded and attended by silence."

4. Getting quiet can regenerate brain cells.

Silence can quite literally grow the brain.

A 2013 study on mice, published in the journal *Brain, Structure, and Function*, involved comparing the effects of ambient noise, white noise, pup calls and silence on the rodents' brains. Although the researchers intended to use silence as a control in the study, they found that two hours of silence daily led to the development of new cells in the hippocampus, a key brain region associated with learning, memory and emotion.

While preliminary, the findings suggested that silence could be therapeutic for conditions like depression and Alzheimer's, which are associated with decreased rates of neuron regeneration in the hippocampus.

What Five Minutes of Silence Can Do for Your Brain

The benefits of taking time out of the day to focus on well-being and lowering stress levels.

By Elisha Goldstein | August 11, 2015

Journalist Andrea Chalupa suggested everyone make a plan to take out 24 hours in solitude. She quotes her father, Dr. Leo Chalupa, saying that "a national day of absolute solitude would do more to improve the brains of all Americans than any other one-day program." This might sound scary to some and intriguing to others, but have no fear, this is not going to happen. But what can happen?

Thomas Merton said, "Solitude is not something you must hope for in the future. Rather, it is a deepening of the present, and unless you look for it in the present you will never find it." Spending time in solitude is actually a very healthy thing to do - it gives us an opportunity to balance the busyness.

We are in an age where there is no solitude at all and if there were any we'd grab for our phones to make sure there wasn't any. Whether you're in the camp who believes it or not, the pace at which we live our lives and the amount of things we try to pay attention to at once are major recipes for stress, anxiety, depression, and addictive behaviors.

Spending time in solitude is actually a very healthy thing to do - it gives us an opportunity to balance the busyness. It's not only a mindful act, but a self-compassionate act too. Furthermore, the more balanced you are, the better you'll rub off on others, so maybe consider it's something that might even make the world a little bit better. So what if we took her proposal to heart, but scaled it back a bit?

How about starting with 5 minutes of solitude a day? Maybe we can even scale it to two sessions of five minutes a day at some point? Why even consider this?

I conducted a national research study in 2006 finding that taking this time out even once a day had significant effects on well-being and stress. I wrote the steps to cultivate these moments in an earlier blog post.

Realistically, 24 hours of solitude sounds overwhelming to most - and when something is overwhelming we don't do it. For example, if we both sat at the bottom of Mount Everest and I said, "Ok, let's do it," most people wouldn't even begin. However, if we sat at the bottom of a five-minute hike up and you knew that five minutes hike in that moment would be good for your stress and well-being, you might have a bit more motivation to do it.

50 Secrets



Of the world's

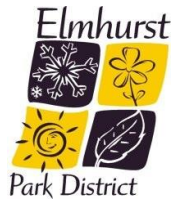


longest living



people

May 11th ~ 12:30-3:00pm



The Abbey Senior Center
407 W. St. Charles Road,
Elmhurst, IL 60126
630 993 8193



Say goodbye to antacids

Do you suffer from heartburn, acid reflux, indigestion, GERD or other digestive issues?

Would you prefer to deal with the cause rather than masking the symptoms with medication?

Learn exercises that have the potential to deal with problems at the root cause & to eliminate them; imagine eating your meals without the threat of harmful discomfort hanging over you.

May 19th ~ 6:00 - 9:00pm



Clauss Recreation Center
555 W. Bryn Mawr Ave, Roselle, IL 60172
630 894 4200

The One Thing You're Not Doing That Will Completely Boost Your Focus

Kate Bratskeir ~ Editor at The Huffington Post

For many of us, true silence only comes when we close our eyes and turn in for the night. Even when we're listening, our minds churn an inner dialogue: We're deciding what we'll say next, contemplating the way the speaker's mouth is moving, thinking about what's for lunch.

A healthy fix of silence — whether it's a week-long retreat or a few, simple moments focusing on the breath — could do you some good. In many eastern traditions, Mauna, or observing silence, is an integral practice: Not speaking, and turning inward is thought to bring peace, clarity and spiritual purity. And in the west, even during secular events, we practice moments of silence, to respect and reflect.

And in our hyper-connected, buzzing world where there's a constant soundtrack to our lives (be it a whizzing car, the bark of a dog or the low hum of a computer at work) you'll have to seek silence deliberately in order to reap its benefits. But, you'll find it to be worth the effort: Your relationship with quiet — and the act of restoring — could improve your skills when it comes to work, friendships and happiness. To start, creative types swear by it. In her book, *The Creative Habit*, Twyla Tharp writes about a soprano who had to give up speaking for three weeks to allow her strained vocal cords to recuperate. The opera singer enjoyed the forced silence so much, Tharp recounts, that she turned going mute into an annual ritual.

It's not only a rest of her chief artistic-muscle — her voice — it's also a stark reminder of the difference between what's worth saying and what isn't. It's the perfect editor for the creative soul. Tharp herself challenges those in search of a creative spark to go on a speaking diet.

Creativity, as writer Mark McGuinness puts it, is a side-effect of meditation: In silence, you gain perspective on what matters, and can more comfortably do away with the nonsense. When you spend time just being present and observing your breath, thoughts, feelings, and moment-to-moment experience, you start to realize how trivial most of our daily worries really are. Even in the midst of the daily grind, you can let go of the small stuff, and keep the big picture in view.

Silence could be therapeutic. Bruce Davis, Ph.D., self-identified "silence freak," and author of *Simple Peace*, says we need silence for our sanity. "The level of noise that we live with really closes us down. People have very little peace and quiet," he told *The Huffington Post*. "Silence is not just no noise — silence

is peace & quiet. And peace & quiet is very beautiful."

Davis holds week-long, silent retreats in Assisi, Italy for people to experience life without the noise. "As a psychologist, this is what I think is perfect therapy," he says. "When you find peace and quiet, you think more clearly, feel more clearly and the body heals itself."

Most people don't know what to do with the "free" time that quiet offers. "Their lives are so busy and so structured," Davis explains. Part of healing requires something as simple as figuring out how you want to spend your afternoon — without distraction to fall back on. That alone can be therapeutic.

Sister Geralyn Schmidt, who took a silent retreat structured similarly to the kind that Davis organizes, discovered that silence is a catalyst for focus. "I found myself observing the unique colors of the houses, the textures of the marble and the awesome samples of flora and fauna," she wrote on *Powerful Learning Practice*.

Schmidt is not alone in her experience: We've all felt the need for library-quiet when struggling to concentrate. But being in quiet, Davis says, take practice. Being quiet can make you more thoughtful. As the saying goes, "In silence, we can hear our soul speak." Without the surface noise, the insignificant chatter will default to mute. "It's often the quiet ones who out-produce everyone else," Roberta Matuson wrote in *Fast Company* last year. You're able to complete a task, without the secondary, often distracting role of talking it out.

Silence can make you a better listener. We are losing our listening," says Julian Treasure in his 2011 TED Talk, "5 Ways To Listen Better." There is plenty to be distracted by, and as a result our skill to really pay attention has weakened. "Listening is our access to understanding," Treasure explains. "Just three minutes a day of silence is a wonderful exercise to reset your ears and to recalibrate so that you can hear the quiet again. If you can't get absolute silence, go for quiet, that's absolutely fine."

Again, practice is important here. "Listening is one of the most difficult skills on the planet," Nicole Lipkin, author of "What Keeps Leaders Up At Night," told *Business Insider*. "It's very hard to stop your mind from wandering ... there are a lot of reasons why it's so hard for us. You can always tell when someone's not giving you their complete attention." Practicing quiet, whether through retreat, meditation or just a few minutes unplugged, can prepare you as a professional and a friend to really hear.

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sation you are having with someone later in the day. It may appear as a satisfying conclusion to a personal event. It may emerge from something you are reading or listening to.

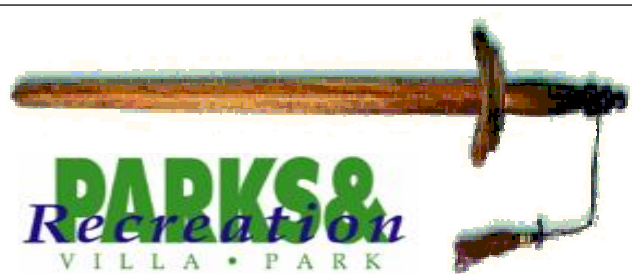
One of the most powerful spiritual practices you can adopt is also one of the easiest to do. What could be easier than simply being quiet and not speaking? There is a little more to it than that - but not much more.

How to Practice an Hour of Silence Every Day

1. Schedule your hour of silence at a particular time every day.
2. During that hour, turn off the phone, TV, radio, computer, and all other appliances and communication devices. Put down all books and other reading material.
3. Light a candle to be a witness to your hour of silence.
4. Sit quietly and restô or look carefully at a natural objectô or engage in work that does not require you to hear, see, or express words. Gentle housekeeping or gardening are excellent activities of silence, or a long walk in nature.
5. Listen to the silence, all the time enjoying this hour-long respite from thinking, reviewing, planning, and imagining. Stay in the present moment.
6. Breathe deeply and mindfully, bringing in the silence and expelling mental ônoise.ö
7. At the end of your hour of silence, let your first word be an expression of gratitude or love; then put out the candle and go about your business.



"Do you have anything with surround silence?"



T'ai Chi Sword

Classes start:

May 10th & July 5th

Tuesday - 3:30-4:00pm

Iowa Community Center,
338 N. Iowa Avenue,
Villa Park, IL 60181

630 834 8970

(Previous Tai Chi experience is required)

CNM CARE

Dr Michelle Ennsmann, DC,ND
Chiropractic & Naturopathic Physician
Health Talks

April 20th

Allergies - Causes, Symptoms & Relief

May 18th

Back Pain

June 22nd

Cardiovascular health

July 20th

Sun Damage, skin care
and cancer prevention

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(630) 216-5916 www.cnmcare.com



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DrEnnsmann@gmail.com

0s165 Church Street
Winfield, IL 60190
(630) 216-5916

Michelle Ennsmann, DC, ND
Chiropractic & Naturopathic Physician

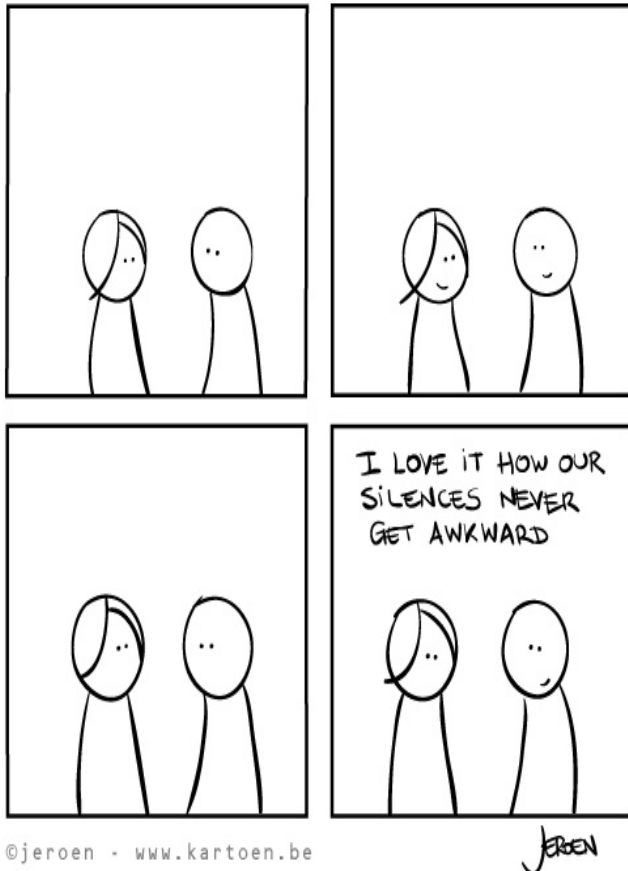


CNM CARE

Cassandra Ennsmann, LMT
Licensed Massage Therapist

(630) 216-5916
0s165 Church Street
Winfield, IL 60190

www.cnmcare.com CmEnnsmann@gmail.com



Upcoming Events

www.7StarsMA.com/SevenStarsStudents.html

World Tai Chi Day

Saturday, April 30th 2016 ~ 9:00-11:00am
The Theosophical Society in Wheaton, IL



The Spring Gathering

Saturday, April 30th 2016 ~ 1:00-4:00pm
The Lighthouse Center in Winfield, IL



World Ki Gong Club Annual Clinic

August 26-28th 2016
Triangle T Ranch, Tucson, AZ

TheosoFEST

Saturday, September 10th ~ 10:00am - 5:00pm
The Theosophical Society in Wheaton, IL

Reiki 1, 2 & Master Classes

September 18th, October 23rd & Nov 20th
The Lighthouse Center in Winfield, IL



Six Healing Sounds & Chinese Health Balls

Saturday, September 24th ~ 9:00am - 5:30pm
Relax4Life in Barrington, IL

The Six Healing Sounds

Sunday, September 25th ~ 10:00am - 3:30pm
The Lighthouse Center in Winfield, IL



Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi

Sunday, October 2nd ~ 9:00 - 2:30pm
Relax4Life in Barrington, IL



Teacher training program starts

September 2016
The Lighthouse Center in Winfield, IL



Annual Student Dinner

Tuesday, November 22nd ~ 2:00 - 4:00pm
Jack & Silverado Grill in Elmhurst, IL



Ki Gong Clinic

Saturday, February 25th 2017 ~ 1:00pm - 5:00pm
Coronado Tidelands Park in San Diego, CA

Watch out for flyers for all these events,
and check our website for updates!

Class calendar

www.7StarsMA.com

May

- 1 Qigong in the Park to June 26
- Creekside Park, Winfield, IL
- 1 Discover the secret of Chinese Health Balls
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 8 50 Secrets of the World's Longest Living People
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 11 50 Secrets of the World's Longest Living People
- The Abbey, Elmhurst, IL
- 12 Say Goodbye to Antacids
- Wood Dale Park District, Wood Dale, IL
- 15 The Eight Pieces of Brocade
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 19 Say Goodbye to Antacids
- Roselle Park District, Roselle, IL
- 25 Don't let stress stress you out
- Lombard Park District
- 29 The Magic of the Pendulum
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL

June

- 5 Eight Step Tai Chi
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 12 The Six Healing Sounds
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 19 The Tangram: a simple puzzle or not?
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL
- 26 The Finger Labyrinth
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL

July

- 23 Quiet Reflection & Meditation Retreat
- Relax 4 Life, Barrington, IL
- 31 The Frolics of the Five Animals
- The Lighthouse Center, Winfield, IL

August

- 26 World Ki Gong Club Clinic
- Triangle T Ranch, Tucson, AZ

Holistic Ceremonies

Created just for you

Weddings, vow renewals, blessings,
commitment ceremonies & more

We can assist you in creating a ceremony that truly reflects and expresses your beliefs and commitments to one another. Traditional, civil, unity sand & candle, hand-fasting and Celtic ceremonies are available. We can legally preside over your wedding ceremony after you have obtained a valid license from the county.

Naming ceremonies & blessings

Honoring a new or change of name is an important moment in our lives; a time to present the new individual to the community; ensuring that they are a part of something greater, placing them under the protection of those present.

House clearings & blessings

We can cleanse your dwelling, room or possessions of negative or stagnant energies and dedicate them to your own spiritual needs, creating a sacred space filled with peace, harmony and healthy positive energy mirroring who you are.

Rites Of Passage

There are many rites of passage we go through in life such as divorce, baptism or adolescence into adulthood. We can help honor your rite of passage by creating a special ceremony honoring your transition.

All our ceremonies are individually designed to reflect your spiritual beliefs, wishes and intentions; to create an occasion as truly unique as you are.

Contact Reverend John

630 229 4434

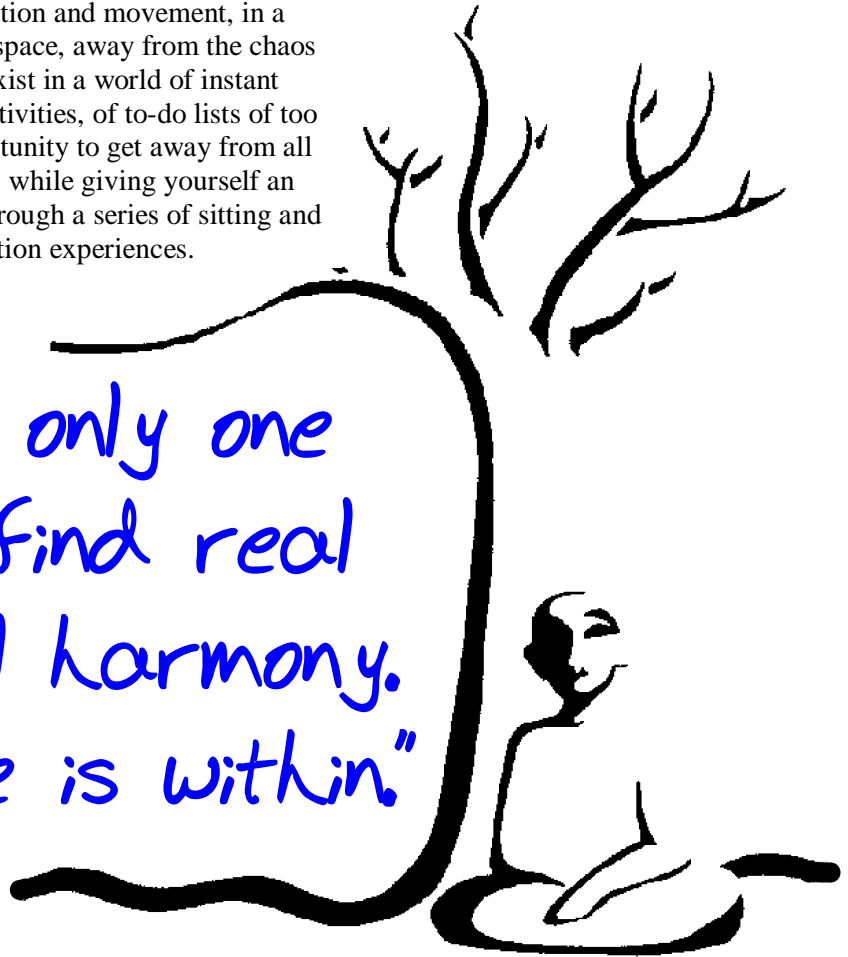
John@7StarsMA.com



Quiet Reflection & Meditation Retreat

Enjoy a day of quiet reflection, meditation and movement, in a beautiful and sacred indoor and outdoor space, away from the chaos of the world. In this modern age we exist in a world of instant communication, of work, of children's activities, of to-do lists of too much to do, of non-stop. Take this opportunity to get away from all of this and enjoy some peace and quiet, while giving yourself an opportunity to recharge and rejuvenate through a series of sitting and moving meditations and reflection experiences.

"There is only one place to find real peace, real harmony. That place is within."



CEUs available for counselors, social workers, massage & occupational therapists

Retreat participants are also welcome to return after dinner and attend at no additional charge our Crystal Bowl Sound Meditation that evening from 8:00pm-9:30pm

Saturday, July 23rd 10:00am-6:00pm



七星武道

Relax4Life

26402 Edgemoond Lane, Barrington, IL 60010
To register call 847 842 1752 www.relax4life.com

