

Self-Discovering The Benefits of Meditating

BY DR. CLAUDIA V. SCHRADER

Once a week at Kingsborough, members of the college community are invited to gather together on Zoom for 20 minutes to take a “conscious nap”, or as Professor Rick Repetti has taught us, “to meditate”. Rick Repetti first came to Kingsborough in 1996 as a part-time faculty member, eventually securing a full-time teaching position and moving through the academic ranks to become a Professor of Philosophy in the Department of History, Philosophy and Political Science. However, his interest in meditation started long before he arrived at KCC. He recounted that at 15 years old, he was flipping through the TV channels and happened upon a yoga class in progress and was immediately entranced. His interest in yoga led to an interest in meditation. The rest is a 50-year history of practicing, learning, writing about meditation, teaching its many benefits, and guiding meditations.

The meditation group at KCC started in 2006 as part of the Kingsborough Center

for Teaching and Learning (KCTL). Initially, a group of faculty members would meet to read and discuss articles, but it morphed into a meditation group led by Prof. Repetti, which would grow to include staff and students and meet at least once per week. On average, the meditations now held via Zoom, have between six and 11 participants and have had as many as 20 participants. Sessions run for 20 minutes and end with a question and answers so that participants can debrief or unpack their experiences. Prof. Repetti shared that meditation has been found to be very support for people during this pandemic period. I could only imagine that it would be. The past two years and now the beginning of 2022 has been difficult for many of us. The new year brought a new variant with new challenges, new concerns, and new stressors. Before I could even get to making resolutions, it was essential that I found a way to embrace some relaxation. For the most part, Prof. Repetti taught himself how to meditate and many



Kingsborough Community College President Claudia Schrader and Professor Rick Repetti pictured in the inset.

of its basic tenets, and now, fortunate for me, there was someone on campus who could teach me about the ultimate de-stressor, meditation.

Meditation provides you with the opportunity to take time out and let go, be still and shift from doing to being. It encourages a heightened state of attention and awareness and can help to clear your mind of stressors. I learned from Prof. Repetti that meditation has been practiced for thousands of years around the world. While it is often used for reli-

gious purposes, it is also used as a therapeutic technique and has been found to have a positive impact on a person’s well-being. There are many types of meditation, but most fall into two categories: one-pointedness (or focusing on a particular target or mantra) and stream of consciousness (or where you are tuned into the changes in your thoughts).

By the end of my lesson, I was ready to jump into a meditation session with both eyes closed. As fate would have it, there was a meditation Zoom scheduled that day. I signed on at the appointed hour. There were nine of us. I was a newbie, and while I wasn’t sure what kind of meditation we were practicing, I knew I was rapidly heading down a stream of consciousness. I was acutely aware of the numerous thoughts going on in my mind. Especially, the thought that said, “you don’t have 20 minutes to spare in your busy day”. But the longer I stayed, the more I was able to relax, focus on being relaxed and sort all the jumbled thoughts that oc-

cupied my mind. I had to rush off the session and into another meeting, but I appreciated the opportunity to be still, even if it was for a few minutes. I decided that I would find a way to incorporate meditation into my weekly routine. I knew that I couldn’t do it in the middle of the day (even though that’s when I would probably need it the most), but I could do it early in the morning before I started my day, so I did. For one week, I carved 10 minutes at the top of my day to be still, take some time to meditate, clear my head, focus my thoughts and just breathe.

*Dr. Claudia V. Schrader is president of Kingsborough Community College (KCC), a 72-acre academic oasis in beautiful Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn that offers students over 50 academic programs, 100 percent online degrees and affordable two-year degrees for their future. For more information about Kingsborough, visit the website at www.kingsborough.edu. Dr. Repetti’s latest publication *Handbook on the Philosophy of Meditation* will be available in May 2022.*