

To create inner stillness

To encourage everyday moments of stillness and to deepen self reflection:—Every lesson at school, morning and afternoon, is to begin with a moment of stillness. This Stillness in thought, concentration turned inwards, is a universal method to reach knowledge of deeper levels of the human consciousness and it's ways of meeting an outer world. The students are taught more of the process of insight and how one can work with experiences of e.g. pain, anger and hatred.

The relaxation response has been developed by Professor Herbert Benson, one of the leading stress researchers in the US, at the Body/mind institute at Harvard Medical School in Boston. It has been tested in a research project, the Education Initiative in American schools in big cities. In the project, the teachers having completed the training, are successfully teaching simple relaxation and stress management exercises to their students.

? research has shown that the methods have resulted in students showing:

More presence

Less absence without reason

Better ability to cooperate

Better study habits

Increased self confidence

Better ability to take charge of one's life from within

Decreased tendencies to violence

Better concentration and ability to learn

Exercises of stillness have also proved to be of use in dealing with all sorts of stress related issues like body tension, anxiety and worry, different heart disorders, high blood pressure etc, back pain, high levels of cholesterol, headaches, sleep disorders and indigestion.

Dag Hammarskjöld created a room for stillness in UN to promote peace in a deeper sense. The room does not need to be big, it's fine with even a very small room.

How you can create a room of stillness in your school:

First you empty the room of all rubbish, scrub it clean and paint the walls white or in a harmonious light colour. Light colours have a calming effect and gives a feeling of space.

What is needed:

A thick warm rug and cushions, surely there is someone willing to give one or two or someone who can find them at the local charity shop. Do mend them if there are any holes in the rug and sew covers in colours matching the carpet. Calm colours are the best.

A low table. A sheet iron with edges filled with sand is an excellent candleholder. Buy thin candles in various colours. It's calming just to light a candle when coming into the room and putting it into the sand.

A beautiful picture which one can rest upon and be inspired. It can be a picture of a tree, a view of nature or a flower. A light, pleasant and natural fragrance can be made with lavender, scented candles or a lantern. A small bookshelf containing books of wisdom or/and enhancing the joy of life.

A big and low bowl filled with water where you can put a beautiful flower and some floating lights. The four elements are represented; fire, light, water in the bowl, the air in the room itself and the earth by the sand in the sheet of iron.

By having these natural elements present a special balance is created. A few folding chairs can be placed at the wall for those who can't sit or would not like to sit on the floor.

How you still yourself

Sit down comfortably.

Relax.

Breathe deeply and calmly.

Choose an object – a word, a thing, a sound or a mental picture – and direct your attention to this. Keep the object in your attention in a relaxed and reposed way. If your thoughts wander, bring them back delicately.