

Holistic Therapies for Anxiety and Depression

By Roseann Capanna-Hodge (Natural Awakenings, January 2019, page 32)

There are other potentially more effective treatments than medication that exist and the central nervous system (CNS) can be regulated through these clinically valid therapies. How the CNS responds to stress is an important step to be addressed. Calming the CNS is critical in reducing anxiety and depression. Here are six natural therapies for anxiety and depression with research that supports their efficacy.

Neurofeedback: Brain functioning is monitored through computers. The brainwave activity is “shaped” toward a more desirable, more regulated performance. This results in a reduction of anxiety as the brain learns to self-regulate and be calmed.

Biofeedback: Using this same technique to learn to control the body’s functions, such as heart rate and breath. Biofeedback gives us the power to use thoughts to control the body, reducing stress or improving a health condition.

MINISTRY WITH Women AT ST. JAMES

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Pulsed Electromagnetic Field and Bioregulation Therapy: This helps the body better self-regulate, adapt and heal naturally, and to align the body so the brain can work better. BRT is a body balancing method where a computer reads the electrical impulses emitted by the body.

Audiovisual Entrainment (AVE): This is a technique that uses pulses of light and sound to safely and gently guide brainwave patterns.

Psychotherapy: This can help with a lingering issue, such as childhood wounds.

Emotional Freedom Technique/tapping: EFT, often referred to as tapping, is a tool used for physical, emotional and performance issues. As a self-help tool, it can be used for anxiety, stress management and wellness promotion.

CHARITY, JUSTICE AND PEACEMAKING

Our Charity, Justice and Peacemaking ministry here at St. James is multifaceted with many different opportunities for involvement. In other words, there is something for everyone! We believe it is our mission to live Matthew 25: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and those in prison. We also believe James 2: that faith without works is dead. Our faith calls us to serve those in need and we support the need for both *contemplation* and *action* in our faith journey. Pope Francis has said, “Works of love directed to one’s neighbor are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit.” This, in essence, is what Social Justice means.

We invite you to get involved. Take a look at the many opportunities to live your faith and get involved in social justice at St. James. For more information, contact: Janine Walsh

Charity, Justice and Peacemaking 203-375-5887 jwalsh.stjamesparish@gmail.com

Prayer Shawl Ministry - The Bridge - The Lord’s Kitchen-Prison Ministry-CONNECT-Merton House-Food Pantry

Ministry With Women at ST. JAMES is a gathering of women sharing their stories and faith!
Ministry With Women at St. James newsletter is digital. If you are not receiving the newsletter by Constant Contact, please contact the Parish Center to update your email address.

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Dear Sisters in Faith,

Here we are on a beautiful snowy day, with the world outside our window, white and pure. A time to think of new beginnings for the new year, but also to be standing in this unique moment of time, and to appreciate it. Change is inevitable and should be pursued as we try to grow in our lives, and especially in our faith. But we should not lose sight of the present and the special way that God is working in our lives right now. We need to reflect on what He is calling us to do, in this moment of our lives.

*“If you are depressed,
you are living in the past.
If you are anxious,
you are living in the future.
If you are at peace,
you are living in the present.”*

– Lao Tzu

We hope we can be at peace, living in the present. Our prayer is that we can let go of the past, which is gone, and let go of the future, which has not come, and trust in God to guide our purpose. Let go...and let God, is our prayer today.

Your Sisters in Christ,
Angie DeMello & Mary Tesla

CONSCIOUSLY CREATE THE SECOND PHASE OF YOUR LIFE

Choice is a Great Power; Use it Wisely

By Tom Scally (Natural Awakenings, December 2018, page 36)

You may be at a crossroads and ready for a change, but unsure of what comes next. You may want to create a new phase, but don’t know how to do that. A study at Harvard suggested that 90% of our day is spent on autopilot. So before you decide to become someone you are not, you need to realize who you are now.

Tom Scally is an intuitive life and stress coach. “His mission is to help unlock your hidden talents and abilities so you can live a life by design and not default.” He believes that self-examination can help you make better decisions further down the new path you choose. You may be settling, and your inner voice starts challenging you to reach for more. He suggests that you do not let your subconscious patterns make your choices, but that you take that power back. “Choice is our greatest power.”

“We all filter, but when we become aware of it, we can improve our relationships with ourselves and then with others.”

Recognizing our patterns and changing them is bringing them from subconscious to conscious. “Think about what would happen if you cut out the bad habits, stopped indulging in limited thinking, and ceased believing in negative thoughts.” Having more control in your life and not just reacting to whatever happens, will let you become your own coach.

The Hardest Word

By Amy Ekeh

In 2006, I had two reconstructive hip surgeries (“triple pelvic osteotomy” for those who like to google). The first operation was a success hip-wise, but it was hard on my body. When I woke up in recovery, my pain was out of control. Over the next several days I had five or six blood transfusions, erratic heart rates and pain. A lot of pain. I remember how lonely the pain felt, like no one else understood. I felt completely alone.

Six months later when I returned to the hospital to repeat the surgery on the other side, I remember looking into my surgeon’s eyes. He wasn’t the touchy-feely type. He wasn’t really a good listener. Not much of a talker either. But before we went into surgery he said something reassuring that—for him—probably required mustering forth and dusting off some nurturing spirit from deep within. I remember something firm, something I could hold onto, something like: “That’s not going to happen to you again. Not on my watch.” And then I told him the truth: “I trust you.”

As the anesthesia took effect and I drifted into unconsciousness, I felt deeply the reality of what I had done. Trust has no guarantees.

Trust may be the hardest thing we will ever do—harder even than love. Because trust so rarely comes with feel-good emotions. It is more often just a choice we make. But without it, we are utterly paralyzed. Without it we are so afraid, afraid of everything. This is no way to live.

Trust is not something that is cavalierly restored, once it has been broken. Sometimes it is never restored at all. But

something happens when someone looks us in the eye, and from the heart, speaks restoring words—words like *never again* and *not on my watch*—and then does restoring things, like setting bones right, or listening, or being humble, or changing. Trust has no guarantees. But we are only half-alive if we never trust. Our whole human community is based on our ability to do this one hardest thing.

I pray that trust will be restored in our Church, and in the life of every person affected by the pain inflicted by and in this Body. Now we feel the cutting of the bones, the loneliness of the pain, the confusion of the aftermath. I pray for healing for every single one of us, so we can trust again, so we can be a healed, restored, strengthened, unafraid Body.

May God heal our Church and restore trust among us.

“I trust in God, I do not fear” (Ps 56:5).

“As we actually taste the flavor of what he’s teaching, we begin to see that it’s not proverbs for daily living, or ways of being virtuous. He’s proposing a total meltdown and recasting of human consciousness, bursting through the tiny acorn-selfhood that we arrived on the planet with into the oak tree of our fully realized personhood.

He pushes us toward it, teases us, taunts us, encourages us, and ultimately walks us there.”

– Cynthia Bourgeault,

The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind

The Unconscious

FEAST DAY OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Both Jesus and Paul love to use the subtle metaphor of leaven or yeast. Paul says that we should “Throw out the old yeast and make ourselves into a totally new batch of bread” (see 1 Corinthians 5:7). He seems to equate the old yeast with our predisposition toward negativity and contentiousness, which we must bring to consciousness or it will control us from a hidden place.

Jesus uses yeast in both a positive way, to describe a growth-inducing “yeast which is hidden inside the dough” (see Matthew 13:33), and in a very negative way, when he warns the disciples against “the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod” (see Mark 8:15).

I would like to suggest these passages tell us that leaven or yeast is a metaphor for *things hidden in the unconscious*, which will have a lasting effect on us if we do not bring them to consciousness. Carl Jung seemed to think that ninety percent of our energy—good and bad—resides in the unconscious, over which we have little direct control or accountability.

If we do not discover a prayer practice that “invades” our unconscious and reveals what is hidden, we will actually change very little over our lifetime. This was much of the genius of John of the Cross (1542–1591) who, in a highly externalized Spanish Catholicism, spoke from personal experience of darkness, inner journeys, and the shadow self. He was centuries ahead of the modern discovery of the unconscious, and thus many of his fellow Carmelites considered him heretical and dangerous.

Prayer should not be too rational, social, verbal, linear or transactional. It must be more mysterious, inner, dialogical, receptive and pervasive. Silence, symbol, poetry, music, movement and sacrament are much more helpful than mere words.

When you meditate consistently, a sense of your autonomy and private self-importance—what you think of as your “self”—falls away, little by little, as unnecessary,

unimportant and even unhelpful. The imperial “I,” the self that you likely think of as your only self, reveals itself as largely a creation of your mind.

Through regular access to contemplation, you become less and less interested in protecting this self-created, relative identity. You don’t have to attack it; it calmly falls away of its own accord and you experience a kind of natural humility.

If your prayer goes deep, “invading” your unconscious, as it were, your whole view of the world will change from fear to connection, because you don’t live inside your fragile and encapsulated self anymore.

In meditation, you move from ego consciousness to soul awareness, *from being fear-driven to being love-drawn*. That’s it in a few words!

Of course, you can only do this if Someone Else is holding you, taking away your fear, doing the knowing and satisfying your desire for a Great Lover. If you can allow that Someone Else to have their way with you, you will live with a new vitality, a natural gracefulness and inside of a Flow that you did not create. It is actually the Life of the Trinity, spinning and flowing through you.

SILENT TOGETHER: WEEKLY CENTERING PRAYER & LECTIO

Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m. in the Chapel

Join others as we practice silence together
to create a more open space for God!

Twenty minutes of centering,
followed by Lectio Divina.

(Note: These gatherings are not a class, a program, or a discussion group—just an opportunity to practice silence together.)

If you are new to Centering Prayer, please contact
Virginia Weir at vlweir1@gmail.com or 203-556-2447.



We want to hear your story.

Send your story to:

Mary Tesla

marytesla48@gmail.com

203-877-4790



THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH
The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices; and with my song will I praise Him.

– Psalm 28:7