

Until about a year ago, I had no use for psychology articles. Like most people, I figured that psychology journal articles were for experts and specialists. Of course, every once in a while there were psychology newspaper articles - greatly simplified summaries of some of the findings in social, clinical, and other kinds of psychology - but even those held very little interest to me. Then one day, I read a psychology article that changed my life. Since then, psychology has been my passion.

It was an article on meditation from a psychological point of view. I am a pretty practical and down to earth kind of guy, and I never put much stock in the idea of meditation. I figured that my mind works more or less how it should, and that there was no point in staring off and chanting nonsense syllables a couple times a day. What do you gain from any of that? According to the psychology article, quite a bit in fact.

It was a mainstream article on the front page of the science section of the local newspaper. It was written perfectly for my level. The author was obviously a layman, experienced at writing psychology articles and other science topics, but specializing in explaining them to your average Joe rather than discussing them with scientists. It summarized the findings of several other, more serious psychology articles. Apparently, many of the major psychology journals had published studies of meditation in the last couple years. Almost all of them showed the same thing: meditation greatly enhanced quality of life. Apparently, meditating for even half an hour a day would enhance immune function, make concentration better, and help make practitioners happier, more levelheaded people. Now I am no hothead, but I do suffer from mood swings from time to time. I decided to try out some meditation.

The psychology journals were right! Although the psychology articles differed in the approach to meditating they used, they all seemed to agree that any one of the common approaches would work. I used the most simple method I could find, and set out to do half an hour every day. For the first week or two, nothing happened, but then there was a dramatic shift in my day-to-day experience. I felt happier, more in touch, and more tuned in to my surroundings. The low-grade respiratory infection I had been suffering from all winter went away, and I felt like I was in perfect health.