

WFWP Australia's Mindful Meditation Retreat - Heal The World

Anne Bellavance
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Expert presenters shared insights and personal experiences on healing, health, and the ways we can implement strategies and practices in our daily routines to eliminate stress and promote a healthy lifestyle.

The Women's Federation for World Peace 2022 Mindful Meditation retreat was an incredible day filled with information on how stress affects our bodies and minds, and how this ultimately affects the health of the entire world, particularly at times like these with the devastating war in Ukraine, the outbreak pandemic of COVID-19 and climate change.



Keynote Address

Anne Bellavance

The day commenced with an introduction from the president from the Australian branch of the WFWP, Anne Bellavance. Anne is the President of WFWP Australia, and a WFWP International Vice-president representing Oceania and S.E. Asia. She has been a Not-for-Profit pioneer and volunteer for 43 years in Australia, the U.S. and Canada.

To establish the focus of the day, Anne presented on the topic: True Enlightenment, the meaning of true love. Anne explained that to find the 'true self', we should place ourselves at the zero point, the place where we return to the state of nothingness. This is the only place where we can be totally united in mind

and body. Where do you think you can find your true self? You find it by practicing a life of true love, always living for the sake of others. If you dwell at the zero point - denying yourself while living for the sake of your family, living for all humankind throughout the world, and living in attendance to God - you will find your true self. It is our inevitable destiny!

Anne (Juo-Wen) Fan from the Love Peace and Harmony Foundation led the first group meditation and opened with the song, Love Peace Harmony created by Dr. and Master Sha, founder of the Love Peace Harmony Foundation.



Presenters

Suzanna Hoffman

The first main presenter was Suzanna Hoffman, an educator, humanitarian, project developer, and coordinator of the event. It was her goal and dream to run an event that could have a first-hand impact on healing the planet through an understanding of self-healing. Her aim was to provide the community with a free event to learn and practice techniques to understand the causes of ill health and disease, to take home and share with their friends and family. Her engaging presentation had the audience up and out of their seats, getting their blood flowing with some simple quick movements and brain gym.

Brain Gym is a safe, lifelong educational, movement-based program that integrates body and mind to bring about rapid and often dramatic improvements in many areas such as concentration, memory, reading, writing, organizing, listening, physical coordination, attitude, and motivation. Suzanna then proposed a few brain-teasing questions to the audience about some common misconceptions on what the body needs to function. She identified that the human body is a natural self-healing machine, and given the right conditions and environment, like all living organisms on this planet, we can eliminate the disease by removing stress from our bodies, minds, and environment. She offered a few simple tips and lifestyle advice: Fresh air, sunshine, temperance, a healthy plant-based and nutritional diet, water and good minerals, daily exercise, rest, and meditation; and finally practicing gratitude and service to others, and smile and laugh as much as possible!

Suzanna then brought Venerable Bodhicitta on stage for a short entertaining interview. Venerable Bhikkhuni Bodhicitta is a Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist nun who is an expert on the topic of stress. She is based in Melbourne and has over 25 years of experience in meditation.

Suzanna posed the question: What is stress? Why do we stress? What happens in our bodies when we stress? How can we manage stress? Venerable used the analogy of an elastic band to explain that we must learn how to balance life and provide the body and mind with the correct conditions and knowledge to live happily and stress-free. When the elastic is stretched too far, it snaps or breaks. Stress is a chemical response in the brain and, over time, if not dealt with, can bring about physical illness.

Tilsa Thomas

Tilsa Thomas, director of Radiant Light of Love Wellness, enlightened us with the hidden and almost forgotten wisdom of the power and healing of laughter. Laughing has numerous benefits to our physical and mental health, from assistance with digestion and colon function to an increase in dopamine production. Tilsa then began a session on Laughter Yoga. Laughter Yoga combines playful exercises to stimulate laughter with yoga breathing that anyone can do anytime and anywhere. It works on the concept

that the mind cannot tell the difference between real and simulated laughter, so all we have to do is put the body into a physical state of laughter and then the mind will follow. Laughter Yoga has numerous benefits in the areas of social well-being, physical and psychological health. For individuals, Laughter Yoga's benefits can be life changing.



Mirella Faulkner

Mirella is a yoga teacher, breathwork and feminine embodiment facilitator. Mirella's teaching style is trauma informed and uses tools including interception/felt sense, to encourage curiosity and awareness of bodily and emotional sensation. Participants were guided in movement and encouraged to move intuitively to connect to their body's inner knowing. Mirella believes that tuning back into the cyclical nature of our body connects us back to the earth and the cyclical nature of the planet and universe.

To conclude our morning session, the guests were invited to enjoy an organic vegetarian and seafood lunch buffet. Many utilized this opportunity to sit outside by the toasty fireplace and converse with other like-minded souls.

Vinod Prassana

After lunch, guests were invited back into the main arena for a Flute Sound Healing with Vinod Prassana. Vinod was born into one of India's greatest flute-playing families and is an award-winning bansuri (flute) virtuoso. Vinod's emotive melodies, exquisite improvisations and divine flute song distinguish his performance of Indian classical, world and meditation music. Vinod has performed and toured extensively throughout his homeland and overseas, including France, Japan, Germany and now, Australia. His performance was powerful and took our guests on a transcendental experience of the mind, body, and soul, allowing them to connect with themselves, one another and the entire universe. Vinod then engaged the audience to open their throat chakras and make sounds that aligned with each chakra of the body.

Anne (Juo-Wen Fan)

Anne (Juo-Wen) Fan spoke about the benefits of Tao Healing hands and Tao Calligraphy. Anne is a Certified Master Teacher trained by the Tao Academy, a Tao Healing Hands Practitioner, Tao Calligraphy Master Practitioner, Direct Soul Communicator, Love Peace Harmony Ambassador, and Tao Calligraphy Teacher. She invited two participants on stage for a live Calligraphy healing session. Both found that their pain had dropped significantly upon receiving this divine healing and blessing. Anne provided an opportunity for the participants' chi to get flowing and receive divine blessings of healing.

Tao Calligraphy creates a powerful vibrational field that carries the positive messages of Tao Source, such as unconditional love, forgiveness, and harmony. In this unique vibrational field, we can transform negative information and energy in our own vibrational field by absorbing the positive information and energy of the Tao Calligraphy. This can result in positive changes in our lives. When practicing Tao Calligraphy by writing, tracing, or meditating in its field, we align with the principle of Oneness and the positive vibrational field that brings balance, rejuvenation, and healing into our lives. Thousands around the world have applied Tao Calligraphy and its healing field to address all kinds of ailments and life challenges. Medical research has been undertaken and several positive results have been presented at medical conferences and in peer-reviewed medical journals.

Rohan Parrant

Rohan has been a coach for 17 years, offering an integrated combination of coaching and consulting services, utilizing a variety of skills to help people make positive sustainable changes and achieve life-changing results. Using result-driven strategies and personalized approaches, he works with clients to find the best solution for them to become the best version of themselves and live a life in alignment with their values. Rohan placed our guests into the awkward and deep parts of ourselves that bring vulnerability and pain. He partnered guests and got them thinking about their personal problems and practical ways they could set achievable goals and actions to find solutions to their problems. Guests took home a simple and practical strategy: STOP, START, CONTINUE. This strategy provided our participants with a simple action plan to get moving towards a better lifestyle and finding their true unique selves.

After a day filled with laughter, joy, love, connection and lots of energy and healing, some inner peace and tranquillity was to process the day's exciting presentations and discoveries on the ways we can heal ourselves. Guests were invited to sit in stillness and silence for 15 minutes with a Meares stillness meditation therapy audio. Stillness Meditation Therapy (SMT) is the authentic meditation originated by Dr Ainslie Meares to enable his patients to relieve anxiety and pain. In short, SMT is an effortless experience where people learn to practice the return to a natural, atavistic state of being.



Venerable Bohiccita

To conclude the day, Venerable Bohiccita was invited back onto the stage to summarise all the information presented. She noted that they were only temporary stress relief solutions, but the true way to rid our stress is to remove the construct of self; without self, there are no emotions that bring about thoughts or actions that cause stress or harm to oneself or others. Her Buddhist perspective left us with quintessential questions: Who are we? What is the self? How do we let go of this concept of self? This, she insisted, requires altruism, compassion, and love to all things by serving others in all aspects. Give blessings to all in your heart and hold that feeling as much as you can. Service the land you stand on, the people you encounter, and love and nurture yourself.

Guests left for the evening with a sense of empowerment, refreshment, relief, and motivation to continue their own healing and spiritual journeys.

Reflection from Participants

"This event has brought a clearer understanding on how the mind and body reacts to everyday life and emotions, and how to deal with them." - Stein

"Wonderful meditation. A day to relax, meet like-minded people in a heart space." - Saheem

"Wonderful event! I left recharged and rejuvenated after hearing inspirational stories and being amongst like-minded people." - Dayment

"Amazing taster of various methodologies and practices that are enlightening and inspiring. High energy and commitment by all." - Daya

"Great speakers, entertainment, yoga, meditation, food, and generally a great vibe with many like-minded people." - Barnaby