

Transcendental meditation

—Getting into it

By NEIL DICKIE

There it is on the board: "Transcendental Meditation as taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi - Introductory Lecture - July 7, 8:30 - Carleton Hall. Free."

Hmmm this must be the same stuff as Valerie was telling me she was getting into. Good vibes. Really should check it out.

Cold black shiny street rainy night, walking up the hill holding my lapels up against the wind; is it a rip-off? I made up my mind to watch the speaker very carefully.

Went in, sat down, big room with over a hundred seats. Two people. Gradually nine more wander in, mainly people in their twenties. One of them is very Indian looking, this must be the guy. It's 8:30.

But then another fellow walks briskly to the front. He's tall, about 25, athletic looking short blonde hair and beard, super tidy looking. He wears a conservative suit, tie drawn at the collar just so not a hair on his head is out of place. He started handing out pamphlets, quite affable and self-assured.

He hung up his jacket, sat down and started his rap after allowing about five minutes for us to peruse the hand outs. A

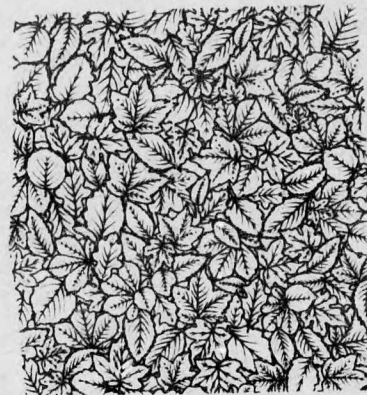
lot of interesting diagrams about breathing and heart out-put supposedly occurring in Transcendental Meditation.

He goes over these and offers a specific definition of what T.M. is all about. "Human existence can be divided into three spheres." He draws a diagram of three concentric circles. "The first (outer) is action; the second (middle) is thought; the third is being or essence." The purpose of Transcendental Meditation is to improve the quality of the first two areas through contact with the third." He talks about T.M. as a technique "that works for everyone", a process that induces a deep state of mental and physical rest. He refers to it as a state of "restful alertness".

A few people ask questions, he tells us the full course will cost us \$35 - "to allow us to continue to teach". After 30 minutes we leave. The next lecture is two weeks away. Two days after this, if we decide to bite, the actual teaching of T.M. will take place, he says.

I bit, and after three months I'm still meditating regularly. Transcendental Meditation is OK. I get off on it.

Ken Daley, 24 is a physed and psychology major at UNB. He has been teaching T.M. for over two years in Fredericton. He saw a poster at UNB four years ago - Bill Watts, a graduating law student was teaching then and learned the technique and got into it enough to go to Majorca for a three month course taught by the system's present proponent, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.



The technique may be defined as turning the attention inwards towards the subtle levels of thought until the mind transcends the experience of the subtlest state of thought, and arrives at the source of thought. The technique is termed Transcendental Meditation for this reason. "It transcends activity" says Daley. Scientists call it "a Hypometabolic state" (restful alertness).

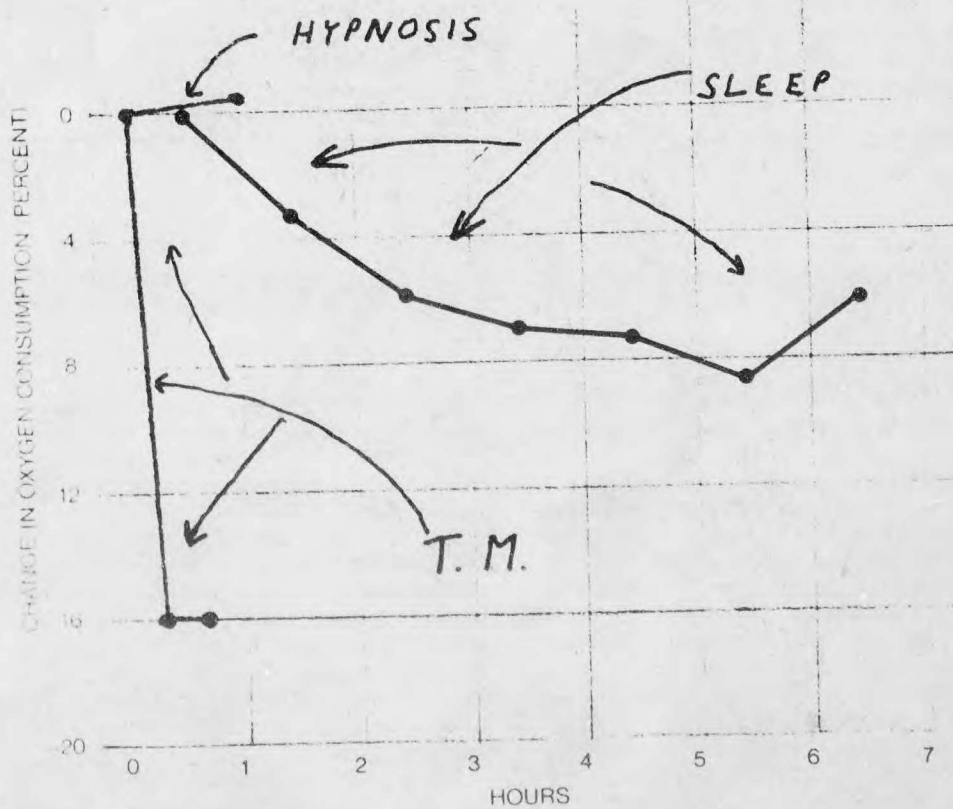
People practising T.M. report a number of beneficial effects in their lives. Some need less sleep. One Fredericton meditator reports that she gets along on three hours less a night. Most, in the Wallace study, report that they get fewer colds. Psychosomatic diseases often disappear after a time says Daley. Many people say that they smoke a lot less dope, some stop using non-medical drugs, including nicotine, altogether. Apparently the experience of T.M. is superior to that of cannabis - in terms of the experience as such and in the fact that there are no negative side effects. Many report increased awareness of their bodies, natural cycles, and other peoples feelings and emotions.

U.S. Olympic medal winning diver and coach Craig Lincoln does T.M. to increase stamina, and speed reflexes. "He has been meditating for a year and a half. He says his diving has improved tremendously in that period and that his whole awareness of what goes into making a good dive has become sharper."

The Canadian Penitentiary Service is experimenting with T.M. to reduce unrest

There are about 15,000 teachers of T.M. in the world at present operating in 27 countries and over 400,000 practising meditators. They are organized by central bodies in each country, and in most cases they come under the jurisdiction of one of two organizations - Students International Meditation Society (operates in Fredericton) or the International Meditational Meditation Society, both are headed by the Maharishi.

When Daley talks about his organization he constantly uses the word "we". He's obviously a dedicated man, spending over 12-15 hours of his own time a week on teaching and doing individual checks on trained meditators on top of his heavy course load at UNB. "Teaching is my life's blood" he says. "I find great joy in allowing a man to utilize more of himself."



CONSUMPTION OF OXYGEN is compared in three different circumstances: during hypnosis (color), sleep (black) and meditation (light color). No significant change occurs under hypnosis. One study shows that oxygen consumption is reduced by about 8 percent after five hours' sleep. Meditation brings twice the reduction in a fraction of the time.



Ken Daley

Photo by Gary Smith