

NOTHING MATTERS

HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS FOR AN OVERACTIVE MIND

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Nothing really matters. Sounds kind of bleak, right? You're probably concocting a whole list of people, places, and things that are of value to you, and you're right. But what I'm referring to is that little voice that creates mountains out of molehills, and tricks us into believing that what takes up high-rent space in our head is of the utmost importance. What if we could lightly touch the chatter and let it go? This is the sage wisdom we've all heard about and that at times we are in command of. Yet sometimes we just can't seem to turn down the noise of... *nothing*.

I'm an early morning riser and I use this time well. Some of my best creativity emerges before the sun. But occasionally, the waking is nothing more than remembering that I forgot something the day before. I missed wishing a good friend "happy birthday" and now my sleep is ruined. Or we're running low on dog food, and I can't relax until I jot it down on the shopping list. These trifles become like a wake-up siren so loud that I can't even hear my own breathing. The fact is, my friend is fine with a day-late wish and the dog will never starve. How then can I rewire my mind to trust that it really doesn't matter?

Overthinking is one of the biggest challenges humans are faced with today. Along with the evolution of a complex brain came an ability to perceive, rationalize, ponder, and evaluate. These are all important activities, but best left for the daylight hours. When we are out of balance, these hyper-vigilant functions come alive at night, trying to get our attention. This creates a schism with our sense of inner-peace and contributes to all sorts of anxieties. One method I like to use when I awaken and it's too ungodly early to get out of bed, is to count backward from three hundred by three... 300, 297, 294, etc. This usually does the trick, but if I'm still lit when I reach zero, I get up and reach for my herbal allies.

Dina Saalisi is a holistic healer, author, and educator who guides others in creating optimal well-being of mind, body, and spirit. Her certifications include National Board for Health & Wellness Coach, Master Flower Therapy Practitioner, and Certified Hypnotherapist.

Skullcap tincture is one of my favorite nervous system tonics. One or two dropperfuls in a small glass of water provides the peaceful effect needed for me to return to sleep. Used for centuries by Indigenous people, herbalists, and mothers alike, this herb is recognized for the tranquility it gives to one's mind—like a soothing cap on one's skull. The tincture can be used for acute instances of night-waking or two to three times a day, over the course of a couple of months, to relax even the most frayed nerves. It is gentle and non-habit-forming.

Take time daily in basic sitting meditation. This ancient well-being practice focuses on the breath as a vehicle for relaxation. When thoughts arise, simply notice them, then return to your breathing. The idea is to gently recognize the mental activity, so that you can release it. Engaging in meditation consistently has been proven to create a sense of inner-peace and is useful in addressing stress and anxiety. Granted, there will always be another thought right around the corner, so consistency with this practice is essential for quelling a busy mind.

For any kind of mental exhaustion day or night, I use White Chestnut flower essence. When the wheels keep spinning and thoughts cannot be controlled, this subtle energy medicine transforms overthinking into a quiet state of mind. Many of us are plagued with this unruly habit and could benefit from a spell with this flower. The dose is two drops, four times a day, until a more balanced mental state is achieved.

A gentle homeopathic approach can be initiated using the tissue salt of Kali Phos 6x (potassium phosphoricum) which is the trace element responsible for repairing worn-out nerves. When our bodies are lacking in this essential ingredient, we may become forgetful, weak, and easily startled. Two or three pellets placed under the tongue may lull you back to sleep quickly and can also be taken a few times during the day if you feel on edge.

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR CREATING A PEACEFUL MIND:

- ENGAGE MINDFULNESS PRACTICES REGULARLY, SUCH AS MEDITATION, JOURNALING, AND VISUALIZATION TECHNIQUES.
- KEEP A RUNNING TO-DO LIST, SO AS NOT TO OVERBURDEN YOUR MEMORY.
- LIMIT CONSUMPTION OF STIMULANTS SUCH AS CAFFEINE, SUGAR, AND ALCOHOL.
- TAKE A WARM BATH FOUR OR FIVE HOURS PRIOR TO GOING TO BED TO SUPPORT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP.
- PUT ELECTRONICS AWAY AT LEAST THREE HOURS BEFORE BEDTIME AND WAIT TO USE THEM FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR AFTER YOU WAKE.
- SPEND TIME IN NATURE OFTEN TO REMIND YOU OF THE SIMPLE BEAUTY THAT SUPPORTS YOU. ESPECIALLY LIVING IN A BUSY CITY, TAKING TIME FOR RESPITE OUTDOORS IS ESSENTIAL.

With consistency of mindfulness practices and the support of holistic herbs and energy medicines, you become more skillful at dancing with the energy of an overactive mind, and you feel more at ease with thoughts as they arise. Rather than conversing with the unproductive chatter of nothing, you become better able to listen for the stillness that is always available within.