

Breathe in slowly ...

La Jolla Community Center offers new meditation class



Meditation teacher Wendy Stuart (at her Fay Avenue office) also guides classes at the La Jolla Community Center. ASHLEY MACKIN

BY ASHLEY MACKIN

When most people think about meditation, they picture someone in white, sitting cross-legged on the beach. Certified meditation instructor Wendy Stuart, through her new meditation class at the La Jolla Community Center, hopes to give participants techniques for meditating anyplace, anytime and wearing anything they want.

“Wendy participated in our health fair this year and the minute I met her, I saw she had a warm presence and wanted to help people. I thought she’d be a great addition to the center’s roster of classes and instructors,” said Nancy Walters, executive director at La Jolla Community Center. “This class will fulfill the need of members looking for a holistic approach to balance, relaxation and healing.”

Stuart’s class clarifies the things that meditation is — and is not.

She said people have different hesitations about trying meditation, and many are based on misinformation. The “biggie,” she said, is that the act of meditation may conflict with religious beliefs.

During Stuart’s guided meditation sessions, she insists people use any words, images or deities they wish to make them more comfortable. “If you don’t like how I (reference deities), bring in (that imagery) your own way.

Wendy Stuart’s Meditation Classes

- **When:** 10 a.m. Thursdays
- **Where:** La Jolla Community Center, 6811 La Jolla Blvd.
- **Cost:** \$10 members, \$15 non-members for the one-hour class
- **Registration:** (858) 459-0831 or ljccinfo@gmail.com

What is Meditation?

- **Meditation** is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness to realize some benefit. The term refers to a broad variety of practices that include techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity and forgiveness.

— Wikipedia

You can say ‘angels’ or ‘Jesus’ or ‘Mother Mary’ or ‘Buddha’ — whatever words make you feel happy and safe — to supplement what I’m saying,” Stuart said.

Another block people put up to meditation is telling themselves they can’t do it.

“There are those who say, ‘I know I can’t break patterns in my head. I’ve tried and I can’t do it,’” she said. “But I have methods I use to assist these folks and they see that they can (meditate).”

Some of the words involved with meditation also make people nervous — words like “pagan,” “Celtic,” “Druid” and “energy healing” — she said. In her classes these words are used as historical

reference and not as theistic suggestions.

Lastly, Stuart said people worry over the idea of being vulnerable during meditation, which is why her primary objective is to make people feel safe. A class starts with Stuart getting an idea of how the group is feeling — whether they’ve had a stressful week or mellow week — and while she encourages people to talk, it is never required.

“People will come in with similar energies most of the time,” she said. “If a group gathers, there’s a reason.” She then tailors the meditation session to the needs of the group.

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