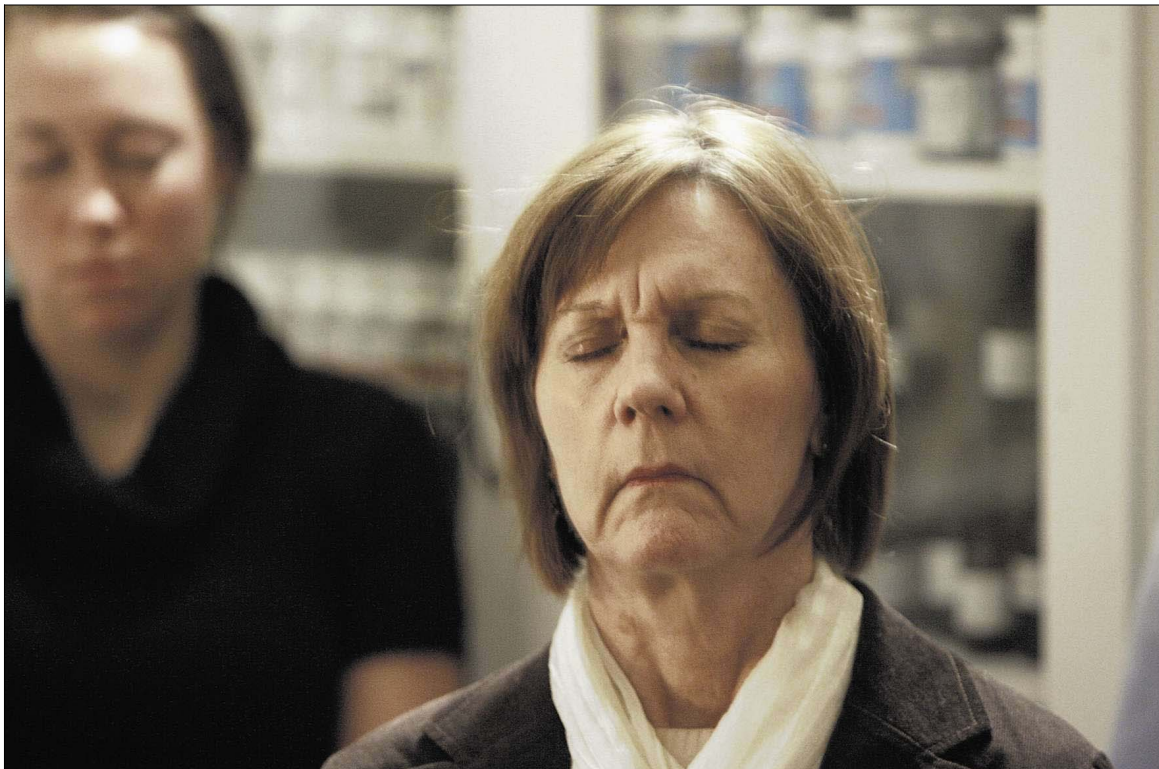


CALM YOURSELF



Photos by WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

Catherine Goodard, 55, of Royal Oak, foreground, and her daughter Caitie Goodard, 25, took a recent meditation class along with Kirk Goddard, 56.

Meditation quiets the mind during holiday and economic stress, says Livonia practitioner

By CASSANDRA SPRATLING
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Sit comfortably. Relax your hands gently on your lap. Quiet your mind.

Take a deep breath. Exhale slowly through your mouth.

Relax.

Repeat.

Thus begins the mind-calming sessions led by Kathy Henning of Livonia, who encourages living in the moment as a way to combat stress and help people live healthier lives.

Henning is holding workshops in metro Detroit and recently produced a CD to help people perfect the techniques called, "Living in the Present Moment; Everyday Tools and Practices."

Calming the mind is valuable, especially now because economic woes and the added stresses of the coming holiday season can take a toll on minds and bodies.

"Dwelling in the past and worrying about the future can negatively effect our ability to



Kathy Henning leads a meditation class at the Center for Natural Healing in Royal Oak. She began studying meditation more than 30 years ago.

be productive, to be happy, to be healthy," Henning says.

Dr. Michael Seidman, medical director for wellness for Henry Ford Health System, says there's ample evidence that meditation, mindfulness, Tai Chi and other practices that quiet the mind have a positive impact.

"Studies show that people who meditate have a lower risk of sudden death from heart attack and certain cancers," Seidman says. "There's no doubt that stress is a significant precursor to most medical disorders."

Henning, 55, a native of Berkley, began studying medi-

tation more than 30 years ago. She describes her style of meditation as simple, easy and accessible. She started holding workshops in metro Detroit in 2006.

"Learning how to quiet my mind and stay present in the moment is the greatest gift I have ever received and I want to share this gift with others," says Henning, who's married to Bob Henning, a writer.

"You can take a few relaxing breaths while waiting for your computer to boot up in the morning or while standing in line at the grocery store," she says. "Even if you can only do two minutes a day, it's like put-

ting pennies in the bank; before you know it you have \$100."

And, as with anything else, the more you practice the better you get. "You'll be able to go deeper and deeper in a shorter amount of time, connecting with that place inside of peace and tranquility," Henning says.

Henning cautions that meditation won't make problems disappear.

"But when our mind is at peace, we can think of solutions and alternative ways to handle problems. If we have a peaceful mind, anything is possible."

After a couple rounds of practice with 14 people during a recent workshop at the Center for Natural Healing in Royal Oak, participants said they felt energized.

Caitie Goddard, 25, attended with her parents, Kirk Goddard, 56, and Catherine Goddard, 55, all of Royal Oak. Her parents suggested she attend to help relieve stress surrounding preparations for an overseas job in New Zealand.

"I've just been extremely busy recently ... and it did help me learn techniques to calm down," Caitie Goddard says. "The one thing that I'll take away is her suggestion to just take a few minutes every day to calm your brain down. That is a fabulous take-away."

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Living in the Present Moment: Everyday Tools & Practices

Mediation sessions with Kathy Bindu Henning

Dec. 7
7-8:15 p.m.
Livonia Civic Center Library, second floor, 32777 Five Mile, Livonia, \$12

Dec. 9 & Dec. 17
7-8:15 p.m.
Center for Natural Healing, 1103 S. Washington, Royal Oak, \$12

Reservations required. More info: 734-674-6965 or www.LivingInThePresentMoment.com

MORE RESOURCES

■ To learn more about free, weekly Sahaja meditation classes offered in Farmington Hills and Ann Arbor, call 877-808-3334 or visit michigan.yoga.org.

■ The Michigan Vipassana Association has offered meditation courses in Michigan since 2002. Details: www.ml.us.dhamma.org.