

PROCEEDINGS

WOMEN, VIOLENCE, AND MEDITATION

MARCH 31, 2012

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum • New York City

SPONSORED BY

David Lynch Foundation's Women's Initiative

Third Fire Films



5 Facts about Women and Violence

- 1** Every 9 seconds a woman is assaulted or beaten in the United States.
- 2** One in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused during her lifetime around the world. Most often, the abuser is a member of her own family.
- 3** A woman in the United States who signs up to protect her country is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire.
- 4** Over 19,000 women veterans have been victims of military sexual assault during the past year.
- 5** Victims often fail to report attacks for various reasons, including pressure from family members, supervisors, and peers.

www.domesticviolencestatistics.org



5 Facts about Transcendental Meditation

- 1** Easily learned by anyone, from the age of 10 years and up – making the technique accessible to everyone
- 2** More than 340 peer-reviewed studies and tens of millions of dollars in funds from the National Institutes of Health has found the Transcendental Meditation technique to be a highly effective modality for the prevention and treatment of stress and stress-related disorders, including PTSD, anxiety, depression, substance abuse,
- 3** Doesn't involve philosophy, change in lifestyle, or belief
- 4** Can be practiced anywhere at any time
- 5** Systematic instruction ensures consistent, scientifically verifiable results

www.TM.org



U.S. Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

“By providing support in overcoming traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies through meditation, you are helping women to take advantage of opportunities that are available to them.”

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to send greetings to each of you attending Operation Warrior Wellness and the David Lynch Foundation’s public forum on “Women, Violence, and Meditation.” I am especially pleased to recognize CNN anchor Soledad O’Brien, and panelists: Tara Wise, Executive Director of the National Women Veterans Association of America, Dr. Pamela Peeke, host of the nationally acclaimed television show, “Could You Survive” of Discovery Health TV; Dr. Lois Lee, Founder and President of Children of the

Night, an organization which has saved thousands of teens from a life of prostitution on the streets of America’s cities; Rita Cosby, best-selling author and award-winning journalist; Joni Steele Kimberlin, director and producer with Third Fire Films; and Pamela Shifman, Director of Initiatives for Girls and Women at the NoVo Foundation.

I am grateful to organizations like Operation Warrior Wellness and the David Lynch Foundation for their commitment to supporting women and helping them advance personally and professionally. By providing support in

overcoming traumatic stress, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal tendencies through meditation, you are helping them to take advantage of opportunities that are available to them. It is my hope that your efforts inspire others to take part in actions large and small, public and private, to create better communities and a better New York.

I send my congratulations to each honoree and best wishes for much continued success.

Sincerely,
Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Pamela Shifman

“NoVo Foundation is dedicated to catalyzing a transformation in global society, moving from a culture of domination to one of equality and partnership.”

Ms. Shifman is the Director of Initiatives for Girls and Women at the NoVo Foundation, where she directs the Foundation’s work on empowering adolescent girls and ending violence against girls and women. Pamela’s prior work includes spearheading UNICEF’s efforts to end gender-based violence in conflict-affected settings, addressing the trafficking of girls and women as Co-Executive Director of Equality Now, and serving as the legal advisor for the ANC Parliamentary Women’s Caucus in South Africa.

NoVo Foundation is dedicated to catalyzing a transformation in global society, moving from a culture of domination to one of equality and partnership. We support the development of capacities in people—individually and collectively—to help create a caring and balanced world that operates on the principles of mutual respect, collaboration, and civic participation, thereby reversing the old paradigm predicated on hierarchy, violence, and the subordination of women and girls.

We place a strong emphasis on the advancement of women and girls. Around the world, women and girls often suffer from violence, poverty, and discrimination simply because they are female. While embodying many of the qualities we wish to promote, women and girls are also deeply under-represented and under-served throughout the world. Investment in women and girls has far reaching impact and delivers high returns for economic growth and broad social benefits to families and communities.

NoVo places high priority on educational approaches that foster a clear and compassionate view of the world. We strongly support the idea that learning is a lifelong process and that the best education nurtures self-understanding and an awareness of the interconnectedness of all things. From this perspective, accompanying our focus on women and girls is a commitment to supporting the education of men and boys so that their roles may also serve to move us toward a more just society.



Soledad O'Brien

Ms. O'Brien is an Emmy-award winning anchor for the CNN Morning Show, "Starting Point." O'Brien also covers political news as part of CNN's "Best Political Team on Television." In 2010, she published a critically-acclaimed memoir, *The Next Big Story: My Journey through the Land of Possibilities*.

"The David Lynch Foundation provides a tool to help women and girls overcome and heal the terrible traumas and abuse that grip their lives. And that tool is meditation."

The theme of this forum, "Women, Violence and Meditation," is very close to my heart.

The numbers of women and girls who are abused and traumatized at home, on the streets, and in the line of duty in the military serving our country is staggering and unconscionable.

- 19,000 women veterans have been victims of military sexual abuse in just the past year.
- Over 100,000 girls and teens under the age of 17 are said to be victims of prostitution in America alone.
- And the number of women and girls who are raped, tortured and killed in war-torn areas around the globe is beyond estimation and comprehension.

I applaud all the good works of all the private organizations and governmental agencies dedicated to addressing the plight of these women and girls who suffer such unimaginable wrongs.

At the same time, I am speaking today in support of the good works of the David Lynch Foun-

ation because it provides something that is missing in the lives of women and girls—a tool to help them, in their own terms, overcome and heal the terrible traumas and abuse that grip their lives. And that tool is meditation.

I learned Transcendental Meditation several months ago at the recommendation of my friend Russell Simmons. Of course, I did not think I could do it. Me, meditate? Calm my always-active mind? Not a chance! But I learned it and I can do it, and I appreciate it so very much each time I meditate. It allows me to experience a state of deep rest and relaxation that is a game changer—if not, at times, a lifesaver—in my crazy world. It helps me alleviate the stresses and pressures of balancing my life as a wife, a mother of four children, and a journalist. I feel healthier and less stressed—I have more energy and clarity of mind.

And this experience—my own experience—is one reason why I am speaking in support of Transcendental Meditation for abused

women and girls. But it is not just my own experience that drives my support. The other reason, and really far more substantive, is because there is ample evidence to show this meditation actually works. As you will hear from the doctors today, there is a lot of science to back up the claim that Transcendental Meditation is an effective tool in the prevention and treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and stress-related disorders, such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorder, cardiovascular disease and insomnia.

Without further comments from my side, because I know there is much to cover today. I will just say it is my honor to welcome you here to this public forum on "Women, Violence and Meditation" on the beautiful Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, hosted by the David Lynch Foundation's Women's Initiative.

I hope you are inspired by what you hear—and motivated to work with the Foundation to bring meditation to every woman and girl who needs it. ■



Tara Jones Wise

Ms. Wise is the Executive Director of the newly formed National Women Veterans Association of America, an organization that strives to provide innovative employment services, one-to-one counseling, and advocacy for increased benefits for women veterans. The descendant of a long line of military active duty service members, Tara is the first woman in her family to serve in the U.S. military. She is a 90% service connected disabled veteran of the Gulf War era, and an MBA graduate under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

“David Lynch Foundation found me—well I guess we found each other. Because of TM, today I feel like I matter for the first time in a long time.”

My name is Tara Jones-Wise. I am a service-connected Gulf War era Navy veteran. After my active duty service as I began my transition stage, I didn't psychologically see "ME" in society. "ME" a military service woman, underrepresented in political offices and in the leadership of Fortune 500 businesses. "ME" a mother with a very young child fighting to change barriers that women have fought for long before me. "Me" with a variety of health challenges like undiagnosed military sexual trauma, anxiety disorder, overmedication, and severe body aches as a result of performing

like a machine. "Me" struggling to provide housing and stability for my family.

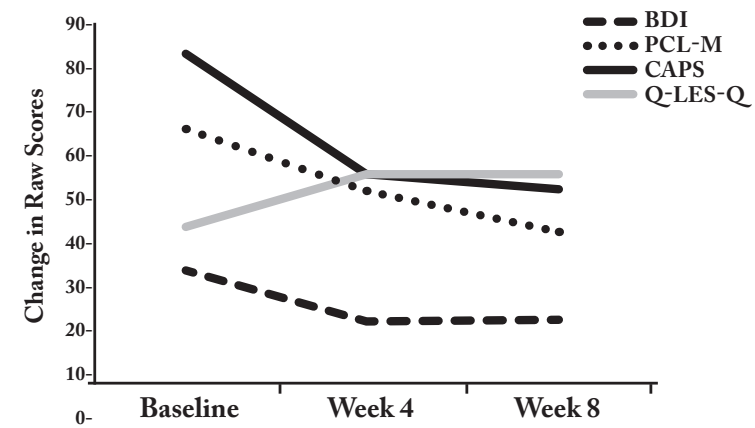
My challenge was women veterans matter too. I always questioned why the civilian community wasn't really fighting for me the way I did for them? Today is so very important for me because I am still here. I researched all I could about Transcendental Meditation. Then I reached out to the David Lynch Foundation. They immediately responded.

It's been over a year now since I contemplated suicide. I felt so low that I wanted to "just not be here." Today I can say I am a meditator—it's that simple. Tran-

scendental Meditation saved my life. It calmed my mind, helped to restore my nurturing nature, restored my femininity, and has helped me to become a better thinker. Once I learned, I didn't have to depend on anyone else. It makes me feel good inside mentally and physically.

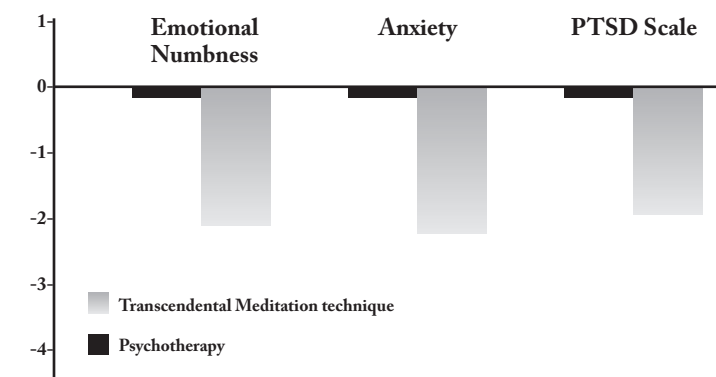
Now I can picture my future of being a grandmother, a successful business woman, and a strong advocate with my fellow sisters. David Lynch Foundation found me—well I guess we found each other. Because of TM, today I feel like I matter for the first time in a long time. Thank you so much David Lynch Foundation. ■

Decreased symptoms of PTSD among OEF/OIF veterans



Over eight weeks, veterans practicing the TM technique exhibited significant reductions in PTSD symptoms according to the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale (CAPS) and the PTSD Checklist–Military Version (PCL-M). They also exhibited reductions in depression (Beck Depression Inventory) and improvements in overall satisfaction with quality of life (Q-LES-Q). REFERENCE: *Military Medicine* 176 (6): 626-630, 2011

Decreased symptoms of PTSD among Vietnam veterans



In this study, Vietnam veterans assigned to TM experienced a significant decrease in PTSD symptoms, including anxiety, depression, insomnia, and alcohol and drug abuse, as compared to controls who received conventional counseling. Within 3 months, 70 percent of the TM group found they no longer needed the services of their veterans' center. REFERENCE: *Journal of Counseling and Development* 64: 212-215, 1985



Pamela M. Peeke, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.

Dr. Peeke is a Pew Foundation Scholar in Nutrition and Metabolism, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland and Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Dr. Peeke is WebMD's chief lifestyle expert and chief medical correspondent for Discovery Health TV. A stress researcher, Dr. Peeke's studies helped confirm the toxic stress-abdominal fat connection..

“Research shows that with consistent practice, Transcendental Meditation can calm the stress response axis in a woman's body, while enhancing her executive functions, centered in the prefrontal cortex of the brain.”

Stress can be your friend or your foe. When stress fuels the spark of personal achievement, it can work to your benefit by making you more perceptive and productive, acting as a motivator and even making you more creative. But when stress flames out of control - as it often does for many of us today - it can take a terrible toll on your physical and emotional health, as well as your relationships.

While stress is not considered an illness, it can cause specific medical symptoms, often serious enough to send women to the emergency room or their health care professional's office. In fact, 43 percent of adults suffer adverse health effects from stress, and 75 to 90 percent of all physician office visits have stress-related components, according to the American Psychological Association.

In today's fast-paced world, women are experiencing more stress at every stage of their lives than ever before. Juggling job pressures, family schedules, money issues, career and educational advancement and child and elder-care concerns are only a few of the common stressors confronting women.

Research indicates that women's biological response to stress is actually to “tend and befriend,” i.e., make sure the children are safe and then network with other women in stressful times; whereas men's biological reaction to stress is to go into the “flight-or-fight”

mode. Studies indicate that the hormone oxytocin, which has a calming effect, is released during stressful events or periods in both men and women.

Estrogen may enhance oxytocin release, while testosterone may diminish it; this may be one reason that women seem to seek social support more often than men when under stress. However, women have also been socialized from an early age to look to their social group, particularly their female friends, for support when under stress, whereas men tend to engage in activities, such as exercise or even using substances, when under stress.

All this can strain the heart and artery linings. In fact, if you already have coronary heart disease, stress might lead to chest pain. Plus, the increased tendency for blood to clot during stress may lead to a clot in coronary arteries, causing a heart attack.

Other physical dangers of stress include stomach problems as bowel and intestinal muscles constrict, and depression and anxiety. While stress doesn't cause these mental illnesses, it can activate them in people who may already be prone to them.

Stress can also cause what has been termed “toxic weight gain.” Cortisol, a hormone released when you're under stress, is an appetite trigger. Those extra calories are converted to fat deposits that gravitate to the waistline. These fat deposits, called visceral fat, are

associated with life-threatening illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and cancer. Too much stress can also affect your immune system, weakening it and making you more susceptible to colds, coughs and infections.

It is important to distinguish between the acute stress response - when your heart beats faster and your breath comes faster as you get a rush of adrenalin - and the chronic stress response, in which you are continually under stress.

This chronic stress response is the one that causes the most problems as it literally wears out your body functions, leading to disease. A common trigger is trauma. One of the most important methods to combat the stress of trauma is through meditation, specifically Transcendental Meditation (TM). Research shows that with consistent practice, TM can calm the stress response axis in a woman's body, while enhancing her executive functions, centered in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) of the brain. The “restful alertness” of TM can lead to a blissful experience of transcendence which in turn channels a positive physiologic response in the PFC resulting in heightened mindfulness, vigilance and the ability to rein in impulsivity, impatience and irritability. As well, over time and with practice, depression and anxiety, often associated with chronic stress, is lessened, allowing for enhanced enjoyment with life. ■



Lois Lee, Ph.D.

Dr. Lee is an internationally recognized expert on child prostitution and Founder and President of Children of the Night. Since 1979, she has rescued over 10,000 American children from prostitution with over \$40 million in private funds. Leaders come from around the world to observe her trailblazing work.

“The David Lynch Foundation has taught me that Transcendental Meditation can be taught to children—children that so many people believe are unreachable and unchangeable.”

Children of the Night has rescued over 10,000 American children from prostitution right here in the United States — more children than all of the other sex trafficking programs combined.

Child prostitution starts at home and most child prostitutes were sexually abused as young children often by their first caregivers. In response, the child learns to shut down feelings and not let anyone inside — they learn to disassociate feelings from their bodies. These children learned how to manipulate people, read people, to size up situations and to outsmart others to survive.

This behavior presents a challenge to current social workers and traditional therapists. The child who has suffered at the hands of vicious pimps and sex predators pushes away the do-gooder or person who is trying to help because the child does not believe there are “good” people in the world.

The child prostitute “acts out” to prove to the “do-gooder” they are not worth helping.

Providing America’s child prostitutes with a stable home, an education and nurturing staff is critical to their recovery. Teaching our children there are good people in the world is essential to recovery from horrific childhoods and requires the realization they are not responsible for their own victimization.

Through Transcendental Meditation these children begin to feel inner strength and shed bad mem-

ories. The initial process involves cognitive skills unlike traditional cognitive therapy which requires re-living trauma. By reaching inside the child experiences peacefulness, goodness and a childlike innocence which radiates much like a concentric circle.

When an abuser threatens a child prostitute with mean words or violence the child automatically runs toward the danger or acts out in a way that is harmful to the child.

Through regular practice of TM—twice a day for 15 minutes—the child learns to pause and process the abusive behavior; therefore, no longer vulnerable to the emotional manipulations of the abuser.

The child develops an awareness of who is good and who is bad and sometimes for the first time in his/her life, learns to “act” rather than “react” in response to harmful people. By reaching into the depths of their souls they find love, happiness and peace and they attract more of the same.

My success with children has come from a set of skills that allowed me to “share their reality” and accept that everyone in the world is not good.

That process took a toll on me as it does with others in the “caring profession” and it is easy to feel isolated and alone in attempts to change the world for those who are less fortunate.

Through my 2 years of Transcendental Meditation I have learned to accept the goodness

from others who want to help me change the world.

TM helped me abandon my restricted thinking that limited Children of the Night’s services to American children across our nation who are under 18 years of age and live in the Children of the Night home.

Through my daily meditations I realized that my 33 years of experience and expertise could be shared with drop in centers, outreach programs and other shelters throughout America to provide educational and mental health services to young people trapped on the streets.

Transcendental Meditation led me to an exciting, cost-effective plan that will leave a permanent and indelible mark on the standard of care for young people forced to live outside their natural homes.

For other caregivers who want to help those less fortunate we must first heal ourselves and discover our inner strength and peacefulness from which all creativity, love and nurturing resides. Caregivers who become so busy and stressed in their efforts to help others often block their own feelings in an effort to protect themselves and they should not be overlooked in the process of helping others.

God gave me the gift to reach into the hearts of children and help them change their futures. That gift was both a gift and a burden until Emily Lynch reached out to me to tell me about the work of the David Lynch Foundation. ■



Sarina J. Grosswald, Ed.D.

Dr. Grosswald is a George Washington University-trained cognitive learning specialist and research investigator at the National Institutes of Health-funded Center for Natural Medicine and Prevention. She is a co-author in a series of trials studying the effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique on bipolar disorder and on post-traumatic stress syndrome among veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

“The Transcendental Meditation technique helps from the inside out. It gives a woman or girl the internal foundation to take control of her life, and to begin to start anew.”

PTSD is far more prevalent than we realize. In recent years it has come to public attention because of the large number of our service members returning from war bearing the scars of that experience. But even setting that situation aside, it is estimated that about 8% of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives.

PTSD does not discriminate. It affects people of all ages, sex, and marital status. In any given year, approximately 5.2 million people in the US have PTSD. Though the prevalence in children has not been studied extensively, more than 5 million children are exposed to some form of extreme trauma every year. 30% of these children develop symptoms of PTSD.

These numbers are staggering enough, but what is especially distressing is that women and girls are twice as likely as men to suffer from PTSD. Yet we hear very little about PTSD in women. Even among the returning military, the focus is almost always on men.

But that will not be the case for much longer. Many of the women in this room are committed to ending the silence, and raising awareness of the extent to which women are victims of trauma—whether it be physical or psychological trauma, trauma from natural disasters or geopolitical forces, or trauma from poverty and homelessness. It is time to recognize the problem and focus on the solutions.

No matter the cause, PTSD

has severe effects on the mind and body. It interferes with sleep, with the ability to concentrate, it creates difficulty with organizing, causes memory problems, and difficulty with anger control, to name a few—all issues that can create challenges in carrying out just normal, simple responsibilities in life. It also creates a sense of hopelessness. And when there is hopelessness, it is very difficult to make use of even the most basic tools and resources that might be offered.

But the Transcendental Meditation technique helps from the inside out. It gives a woman or girl the internal foundation to take control of her life, and to begin to start anew.

The Transcendental Meditation technique allows the mind to settle down to the quiet reservoir of inner strength. That ability to transcend, to experience pure silence and peace, and to experience a state of deep rest has a very profound effect on the mind and body.

Numerous peer-reviewed published studies have shown the effectiveness of the TM technique to reduce stress, anxiety and depression; reduce symptoms of PTSD; and improve the quality of life in military veterans, college students, children and adolescents, and the general population.

I want to highlight just a few of the results from these studies. In a randomized controlled study of Vietnam veterans in the 80's, those practicing the TM technique showed dramatic reductions in symptoms within three months.

In contrast, the control group, receiving usual care, showed no significant changes, and in some cases the symptoms got worse. The TM group had a 54% reduction in PTSD symptoms; 54% reduction in depression; 45% reduction in anxiety; and 40% reduction in emotional numbness. There were also very large improvements in sleep, and a huge reduction in self-medicating by alcohol.

A pilot study of veterans returning from the Iraq/Afghanistan wars showed 50% reductions in PTSD symptoms in just 8 weeks, and a 23% improvement in quality of life.

A pilot study of stressed children, suffering from psychological disorders, showed a 50% decrease in anxiety problems, and 53% reduction in symptoms of anxiousness and depression.

Other parts of the world populations are subjected to trauma every day. In Africa, tens of millions have been victims of violence, or have witnessed the horrors of wars that have often targeted women and children.

In 2011, the African PTSD Relief Project was founded to address this epidemic crisis. Working in collaboration with the David Lynch Foundation, the African PTSD Relief Project plans to partner with top humanitarian organizations to help survivors of war reclaim their lives by overcoming the effects of traumatic stress and re-establishing a positive state of physical, emotional and social well-being through the Transcendental Meditation program. ■



Rita Cosby

Ms. Cosby is a renowned Emmy-winning TV host, veteran correspondent, daughter of a WW II POW, and bestselling author of "Quiet Hero." She is currently a special correspondent for the top-rated CBS syndicated news magazine, "Inside Edition," and hosts WOR's nationally syndicated radio program, "The Rita Cosby Show."

"I wish in my own life, my father and my family would've known about TM many years ago. I believe he could've found an inner peace from the demons of war, and I could've found my father that much sooner."

As a television journalist for more than twenty years, I have seen women and girls in their worst state, overwhelmed by their difficult ordeals from battling homelessness, drugs, prostitution... or from a fight of a different kind, a deep depression or anxiousness stemming from the traumas of war.

Post traumatic stress can immobilize even the most courageous veteran and the numbers are staggering. An estimated half million men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan alone are believed to have some form of PTSD, numbers which should make us all realize it is our problem as a society, and our responsibility to help those who've given their all for our country.

Yet PTSD is so pervasive and so complex, that often caregivers begin to experience many of the same symptoms of traumatic stress and thereby need help themselves for similar symptoms. Transcendental Meditation can be the solution to providing comfort not only to those suffering from the unseen wounds of war, but also for those family members or other caregivers who are mentally and physically exhausted and need a daily recharge to enhance their own mental stability.

I know firsthand what the effects of mental trauma can do to a family. One Christmas when I was a teenager, my own father left our family and was truly a man void of any emotional connection. Decades later, I learned he was a Nazi prisoner of war who experi-

enced more horror by the age of eighteen, than most of us will ever experience in a lifetime. Indeed, amid a massive assault of enemy gunfire, flamethrowers and bloodshed, he narrowly escaped through a maze of sewers. Soon after, he was severely injured and captured, only to escape again months later when he was weighing just 90 pounds and standing six feet tall. How could experiencing such brutality at such an early age, not affect him and others close to him the rest of his life? In fact, I never really knew my own father until we reunited just a few years ago. War had devastated our family and our relationship.

Sheer stress from battle caused my father not to be able to relate to people on a personal level for decades, even with his own family. This led to decades of anger, confusion, and deep, wrenching heartache. Through Transcendental Meditation, I finally have found an inner peace and sense of calm, and been able to talk to other family members and caregivers of those battling PTSD across the world, stressing they also take care of themselves in order to be in the best shape to help those they love. Assisting warriors to overcome PTSD or caring for anyone overcoming some form of trauma, is often a long, grueling, and very unpredictable road. TM provides the giver an increased appreciation for their own strength, self-worth and a much-needed daily chance to rejuvenate, refocus and bring clarity.

"Caregiver Stress Syndrome" has actual physiological and psy-

chological symptoms that can result from the ongoing emotional strain of care giving for a loved one, or attending to the all of the needs of a child or dependent adult. More women than men are caregivers, with women making up a whopping 66 percent of the caregiver population. Studies show that over time, they experience their own PTSD... sleep deprivation, increased stress, burnout, substance abuse and poor eating habits. They are more likely to miss their own doctor's appointments, putting their own needs on the back burner. Women, in particular, studies show, are more likely to suffer from high stress due to care giving than men.

Research has shown that TM can reduce symptoms of PTSD in the warrior and the caregiver by as much as 50 percent. In a landmark study pioneered at the Denver Veterans Center, after just three months of practice, veterans experienced significant across-the-board reductions in emotional numbness, anxiety and PTSD symptoms.

I wish in my own life, my father and my family would've known about TM many years ago. I believe he could've found an inner peace from the demons of war, and I could've found my father that much sooner.

Today my dad is finally home, and thanks to TM, I can look at this very bumpy journey as a valuable life experience, which I hope, will help others find that true joy and sense that anything can be overcome if you learn to look within yourself. ■



Joni Steele Kimberlin

Ms. Kimberlin is a producer and director with Third Fire Films, and a founding and dedicated member of the David Lynch Foundation Board of Directors. She is a teacher of Transcendental Meditation and has practiced TM for 38 years. She is a mother of three.

“I don’t know a better way to ensure the future of our girls and young women than to give them the gift of Transcendental Meditation.”

I’m very happy to have the opportunity to be with you today. I want to share with you some things I learned recently as I made a film called “Get Real! Wise Women Speak”—about amazing women in the third stage of their lives, and the inner fire that propels them to use their wisdom and experience to make a difference in the world.

I was disgusted with the way popular media portrays women, young or old. So I went in search of modern day wise women

After all, mythology and ancient literature across the board in nearly every culture, represents wisdom as feminine. No surprise there!

There are 18 women in my film including Marianne Williamson, Della Reese, Jane Fonda, Nobel Prize winner Jody Williams, poet Nikki Giovanni, Susan L. Taylor, and the council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers.

I learned that motivation shifts in life when ambition is replaced by meaning. An inner fire is sparked, often in the third stage of life, propelling individuals to use their time, experience and wisdom to improve the world. We call this burning desire to infuse action with meaning the Third Fire. As cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien told us: “It has to have fire, or I won’t do it.”

What has fire for these women? Helping others—and that frequently means women and girls. Jane Fonda’s passion is working with adolescent girls. Susan Taylor

told me that she is ‘on fire’ to help young people—her foundation mentors young people. Swanee Hunt works to improve the lives of women in violent conditions. Jody Williams won a Nobel Prize for her work against landmines. Tenzin Palmo is a Buddhist nun who created a nunnery in the foothills of the Himalayas for girls—who escape on foot through the mountains of Tibet to reach it.

Some women in the film who are dear to me are from the Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers who travel the world with their tribal knowledge creating peace and healing. Flordemayo who is of Mayan descent tells us: “Women are the keepers of the knowledge of the feminine. Our culture is very family and community oriented—our young girls are not left alone. They’re being taken care of. And it’s the role of women to be advisors to girls.”

So how do we help vulnerable girls and young women? One of the standout takeaways from my film is the importance the women place on creating Sacred Space in their lives. Della Reese said, “My favorite quote is: ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ That’s more than just a sentence. Stop running around like a chicken with his head cut off. Be still, and know that you know what you know.” Indigenous Grandmother Agnes, a Native American Elder, advises: “To be a woman of wisdom you need to incorporate spirit world, and listen to spirit world.”

The wise women in my film

take time daily to commune with their inner Selves, release stress and become more effective. So it’s no surprise that many of these women, including the indigenous grandmothers, practice Transcendental Meditation—which has been scientifically verified in hundreds of studies in prestigious journals to effectively release stress and create inner happiness. It’s an incredibly effective technique that has been proven to work over and over for decades.

One of the things I’m on fire for is to help our most vulnerable young people by bringing TM to them. That’s why I’m on the Board of the David Lynch Foundation and why I help fund Lois Lee’s Children of the Night. One of my cherished memories is meditating with Children of the Night kids last year in Los Angeles. They are no different than my own kids in their hopes and dreams for the future—and I’m so deeply happy that TM is going to help them get there.

I’d like to close with a quote from the film by Angeles Arrien: “The elders’ greatest responsibility is to re-enchant the world. To bring magic, possibility and great love into children’s lives and assure them that they can do anything. It’s a part of mentoring the next generation and planting seeds so that they become our future.”

I don’t know a better way to ensure the future of our girls and young women than to give them the gift of Transcendental Meditation. ■

The New York Times

EDITORIAL

Sexual Violence and the Military

MARCH 8, 2012

The rate of sexual assaults on American women serving in the military remains intolerably high. While an estimated 17 percent of women in the general population become victims at some point in their lives, a 2006 study of female veterans financed by the Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that between 23 percent and 33 percent of uniformed women had been assaulted. Those estimates are borne out in other surveys, and a recent Pentagon report on sexual assaults at the service academies found that in the 2010-11 academic year, cadets and midshipmen were involved in 65 reported assaults.

Too often victims are afraid to come forward. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta estimated that the number of attacks in 2011 by service members on other service members — both women and men — was close to 19,000, more

than six times the number of reported attacks.

The problem has outlasted decades of Pentagon studies and task forces and repeated vows of “zero tolerance.” Mr. Panetta has promised that this time will be different. In February, he told Congress, “We have got to get our command structure to be a lot more sensitive about these issues, to recognize sexual assault when it takes place and to act on it, not to simply ignore it.”

Mr. Panetta has announced welcome reforms, including more money for training military investigators and judge advocates to prosecute sexual assault cases, more opportunity for victims to report crimes and request transfers and a system to collect and monitor assault cases...

The Defense Department’s record of prosecuting assault cases is dismal. In 2010, fewer than 21 percent of cases went to trial,

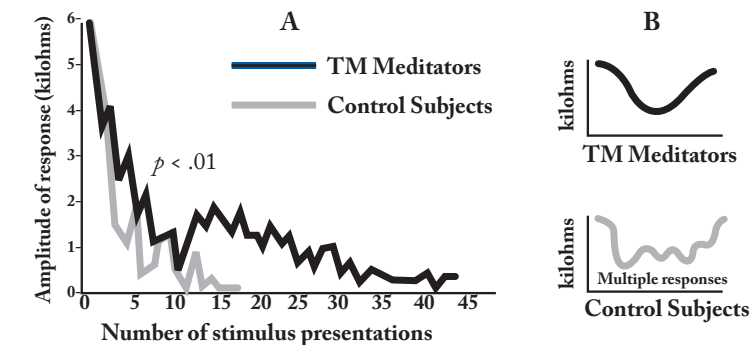
for a number of reasons, including decisions by commanding officers not to prosecute or to impose nonjudicial or administrative punishments. About 6 percent of the accused were discharged or allowed to “resign in lieu of court-martial” — quit their jobs. Only about half the cases prosecuted resulted in convictions.

There are also serious problems in the civilian world. It is even harder for military women to get away from abusers they work with or for; they can’t just quit their jobs or leave a combat zone. They must rely on commanding officers who act as investigators, judges and juries, in an extremely tight-knit workplace...

The Pentagon insists that it can reform itself, and we are aware of the perils of civilian intrusion into the military justice system. But for “zero tolerance” to become a reality, Congress may have to push reform forward. ■

How the TM technique decreases symptoms of PTSD

The TM technique produces its beneficial effects in many ways, including by decreasing overactivity of the sympathetic nervous system (fight-or-flight response). Ideally, the fight-or-flight system should only be activated in response to a stress. People who have this system turned on when they are not actively subjected to stressful stimuli (such as veterans who suffer from combat-related PTSD) would be expected to show wear and tear both physically and mentally. By shortening the alarm response to stress, the TM technique returns the sympathetic nervous system to more efficient functioning and reduces physical and psychological symptoms of stress.



Increased resistance to stress

In this study, TM participants showed more rapid physiological recovery from the stress of a loud sound. The meditators also had fewer false alarms—that is, they did not show these alarm responses in the absence of stress. REFERENCE: *Psychosomatic Medicine* 35: 341-349, 1973



Evidence-based results for adults and youth

- 1 Decreased anxiety (as shown in a meta-analysis of 146 studies)³
- 2 Decreased cigarette smoking, alcohol abuse, and drug abuse (19 studies)²
- 3 Significant decreases in PTSD symptoms among Vietnam veterans as compared to controls⁴
- 4 Significant decreases in PTSD symptoms among Vietnam veterans with concurrent substance abuse addictions as compared to controls, who received only psychoeducation⁴
- 5 Substantially reduced anxiety and depression with improved enjoyment of life among veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan¹
- 6 An average 50 percent reduction in levels of salivary alpha-amylase, a biological marker of stress, among veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, suggesting that regular TM practice may lower sympathetic nervous system activity¹
- 7 Improved student grades, standardized test scores, attendance, interpersonal relations, quality of sleep, and self-esteem, and significant reductions in depressive symptoms and anxiety⁵

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“Meditation has been a lifesaver for me.”

About the David Lynch Foundation

At-risk populations suffer from epidemic levels of chronic stress and stress-related disorders—fueling violence, crime, and soaring health costs, and compromising the effectiveness of education, health, rehabilitation, and vocational programs now in place.

The David Lynch Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, along with its Operation Warrior Wellness division, was established in 2005 to fund the implementation of scientifically proven stress-reducing modalities, including Transcendental Meditation, for at-risk populations such as underserved inner-city students; veterans with PTSD and their families; American Indians suffering from diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and high suicide rates; homeless adults and youth participating in reentry programs striving to overcome addictions; and incarcerated juveniles and adults.

The David Lynch Foundation's Women's Initiative

The DLF Women's Initiative was established in 2012 to address the epidemic of traumatic stress and violence among women and girls. The Women's Initiative is currently

working with women veterans who suffer from PTSD and military sexual assault; girls and teens who have been rescued from a life from prostitution; women and girls who suffer from domestic abuse; and women and their daughters who are raped and tortured in war-torn regions all over the globe.

Research and Support

The David Lynch Foundation and the DLF Women's Initiative funds university and medical school research to assess the effects of the program on academic performance, ADHD and other learning disorders, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, cardiovascular disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, and diabetes.

The effectiveness of the Foundation's programs have been researched at leading medical schools, including Harvard Medical School, Stanford Medical

School, and Yale Medical School; and have received the endorsement of and support from private foundations and government agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, General Motors Foundation, the Chrysler Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, the American Indian Education Association, Indian Health Services, many school districts, and state departments of corrections.

With Appreciation

We are grateful to the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Third Fire Films, and Joanna Plafsky for their generous event sponsorship. As a result, all donations go directly to support programs which provide Transcendental Meditation instruction and weekly mentoring for women and girls who have been victims of traumatic stress and violence.

CONTACT US

For more information on how you or your foundation or organization can help us secure funds to support our outreach to women and girls, please contact:

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