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THE EFFECT OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM ON SELF-ACTUALIZATION, SELF-CONCEPT, AND HYPNOTIC SUSCEPTIBILITY

JOSEPH M. ROSENTHAL

Department of Psychology, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.

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Subjects practising the Transcendental Meditation technique showed greater improvements in self-actualization and self-concept than controls and subjects practising relaxation or contemplation. —EDITORS

The following is an abstract of the author’s original master’s thesis presented to the Graduate Division of the University of Hawaii in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Fifty-seven male and female subjects were selected from the general university student population on the basis of their response to an announcement offering instruction in techniques of personal growth, including meditation. Subjects were then randomly assigned to four groups:

1. The Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique (N = 13);
2. An intellectual meditation procedure, IM (N = 12) (just sitting and reading about an expanded view of human potential, a form of bibliotherapy);
3. A deep neuromuscular relaxation procedure, DNR (N = 13) (sitting with eyes closed, turning the attention inward and allowing the muscles to relax and achieve deep states of rest; this procedure was specifically designed to mimic the TM technique in all aspects except the mantra);

All subjects were tested in a pretest-posttest design, using measures of self-actualization (Personal Orientation Inventory), self-concept (Tennessee Self-Concept Scale) and hypnotic susceptibility (Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility).

All groups of subjects were required to attend all of the introduction and instruction sessions of their particular method. These were modelled after the standard Transcendental Meditation program formats, so that all subjects would receive the same
amount and kinds of attention. Thirteen hypotheses were tested to compare results of the effects of the different treatment groups.

Over a five-week period, subjects practicing the TM technique showed significantly greater gains in self-actualization and enhanced self-concept than controls; they showed no increase in hypnotic susceptibility scores over the same five-week period. An analysis of intercomparisons of the other two treatment groups with the Transcendental Meditation technique group showed that some benefits are derived but are not as dramatic or widespread as the Transcendental Meditation technique. Overall effects show that the magnitude of change followed the trend: Control < IM < DNR < TM.