

focus on...

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

*Iconic filmmaker David Lynch has
a viable solution to a pressing problem*

Do many people in the United Kingdom recall Hubert Humphrey, Lyndon Johnson's Vice President in the White House in the 1960s? Hubert was bright and loquacious, so much so that one Washington wag said he offered "more solutions than there are problems."

Similarly, the Obama Era is spawning a flood of proposed solutions to current problems, many of which, while promising, have little or no track record. Into this maelstrom of speculation I wish to draw attention not only to a very serious situation but also to a solution, which, after less than five years, already has a stunning record of achievement.

Enter iconic American filmmaker David Lynch, director of TV's groundbreaking "Twin Peaks," and feature films that include "Eraserhead," "Blue Velvet," "Elephant Man," "A Straight Story," "Mulholland Drive," and, most recently, "Inland Empire." The Guardian has dubbed Lynch "the best film director of this era," but an illustrious career has not impeded his concern for the welfare of today's at-risk school kids. The modality of his choice to help them? Meditation, and specifically Transcendental Meditation, or TM, which is neither a religion nor a philosophy and therefore requires no change of lifestyle.

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Transcendental Meditation is a simple, easily learned technique, practiced for 20 minutes twice daily while sitting comfortably in a chair with eyes closed. This quiet time provides the mind and body with a unique state of "restful alertness" which allows stress and fatigue to be released in a natural way, resulting in better health, greater energy, more clarity of mind, and overall enhancement of the joy of life. It utilizes the natural tendency of the mind to go to a field of greater happiness, hence is basically effortless, differing thereby from all other meditation techniques, which invariably involve either concentration or contemplation,

modalities that tend to keep the mind on the surface level of thought and so impede the transcending process.

Michael Pierce MA (Cantab) has taught TM in London for 30 years and in his vast experience, notes that one of the main inspirations for people learning TM in the UK – along with the clinical evidence on hypertension and depression – is David Lynch. "He's appealed to a whole new generation here, who are inspired by the creativity and vision that he says he owes to TM. Newer British celebrities, like Russell Brand, have also been inspired to learn TM by him, and Brand is currently fundraising for the David Lynch Foundation, via the charity website, Crowdfunder. It's great in the year we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of TM in the UK to have so many younger people learning the technique, as well as those motivated by the headlines in the British media in the last 12 months about TM halving heart attacks, strokes and depressive symptoms in heart disease patients".

John Hagelin, Ph.D., world-renowned quantum physicist ("What The Bleep Do We Know!?" and "The Secret") and recipient of the coveted Killby Award, describes Transcendental Meditation as "a systematic means to turn the attention powerfully within, to experience and explore deeper levels of mind, quieter levels of human awareness, a state of rest for the body deeper than sleep, where deep-seated stress is dissolved, providing an effective prevention and treatment for stress-related illness."

Over 600 scientific studies have been conducted on Transcendental Meditation at 250 medical schools and universities in over 30 countries to verify its wide range of benefits for the individual and society. Most notably, the U.S. National Institutes of Health, or NIH, funded in recent decades \$26 million in grants to study the effects of TM practice on high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, obesity, and heart disease. Subjects for research have been readily available because the TM technique has now been taught to six million people in over 120 countries.

The timeless knowledge of TM derives from the Vedic heritage of India, the world's oldest system of knowledge. Veda means truth, or knowledge, and this tradition provides knowledge about many areas of life. For example, Yoga comes from the Vedic tradition, as does Ayurveda, the world's most ancient system of health care, and Sthapatya Veda,

knowledge about building in accord with Natural Law. The knowledge of Transcendental Meditation was revived in our era by the revered sage Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who received it from his own teacher, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, and launched, in 1957, a worldwide movement to make it available on every continent. Maharishi first came to the United Kingdom in 1959, and on many occasions thereafter, to oversee the progress of the local TM movement.

David Lynch talks of the inspiration behind his personal involvement with TM:

"My sister called, and she had started TM," he reminisces. "There was something in her voice - less stress and more happiness, a certain upbeat lift. 'I gotta have that,' I said to myself. When I actually started, it was like boom, as if a cable had been cut and the elevator plunged right down into pure consciousness. I have been 'diving within' through the Transcendental Meditation technique for over 30 years now. It has changed my life, my world, allowing me to release stress that was causing fear and anxiety, opening the door to heightened creativity and bliss."

Describing his journey which led to the formation of the David Lynch Foundation, David said:

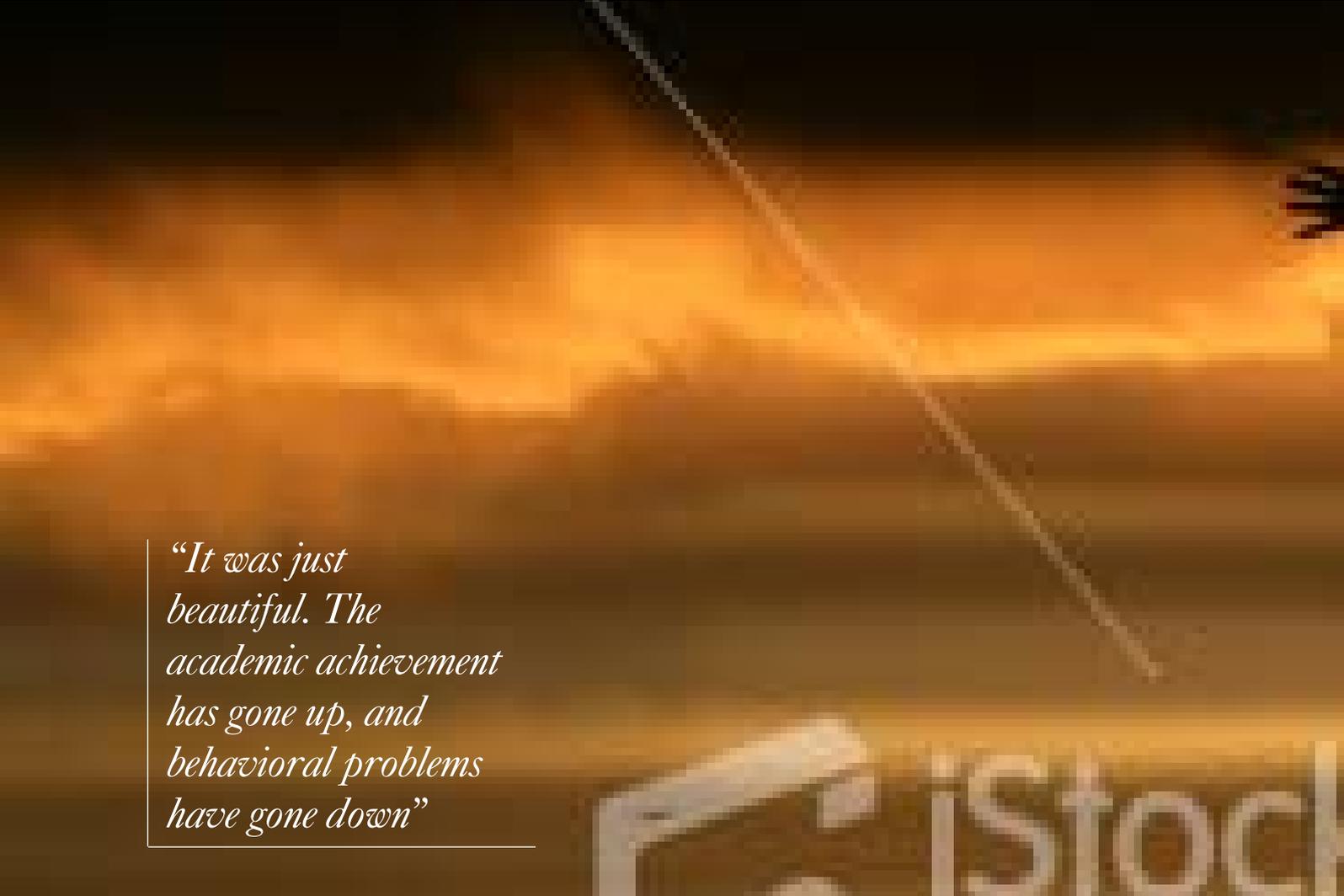
"Not long ago, when I heard about the crippling levels of stress and violence in the lives of children today, about the need for armed guards to patrol school corridors, and about widespread use of prescription drugs with deleterious side effects, I became concerned about what this was doing to the health of these children and their ability to learn. Discussing the matter with a friend, the thought came that in today's turbulent world all school kids should have a class period to begin and end the school day where they can dive within and experience the field of silence, the transcendental level of life, which is an enormous reservoir of energy and intelligence within all of us."

To help at-risk students, the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace was formed and David promptly made hefty donations to give it a jump-start. Since then the DLF has helped fund "Quiet Time" programs, which are always voluntary, around the world, teaching TM to over 100,000 children in the United States and Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. Progress was made in the financial area by a benefit concert given at New >>

York's Radio City Music Hall and featuring such renowned meditating artists as Beatles Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, legendary singer/songwriter Donovan, Mike Love of the Beach Boys, flute virtuoso Paul Horn, Sheryl Crow, Moby, Eddie Vedder, Ben Harper, Russell Simmons, co-founder of the pioneering hip-hop label Def Jam, and Jerry Seinfeld in a winning stand-up comic skit. Since a huge number of schools around the world remain on a waiting list for

For the past three years, researchers there have conducted controlled studies on the effects of Transcendental Meditation for reducing acute stress and behavioral problems. Also underway or under consideration to upgrade reservation life are wind and energy development, organic farming, and cultural preservation. John Boncheff, the program's co-director, says findings to date show that TM in the Winnebago School promoted improved

and physiology at Maharishi of Management, has been working with at-risk adolescents in U.S. schools and reports on a study recently conducted at the University of Connecticut involving 106 secondary school students from three public schools, primarily from lower income, minority populations. "Meditating students," he relates, "showed significant reductions in anxiety, emotional problems, and hyperactivity, and improved overall



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Quiet Time programs, plans are underway for future benefit concerts in different venues.

While a wide range of public, private, and charter schools have instituted Quiet Time programs, the David Lynch Foundation is also sponsoring a project called the Model American Indian Community Initiative on the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska, the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and the Passamaquoddy Reservation in Maine.

standardized state tests of mathematics and reading in students below proficiency level, less absenteeism, and higher graduation rates. Prosper Waukon, a Winnebago elder and tribal council leader, states that diabetes strikes a startling 80% of American Indians, and that since starting TM some have been able to better their overall health outcomes and rely less on diabetes medications.

Dr. Sanford Nidich, professor of education

mental health after an average of four months compared to controls." "Something must be done to help today's youth deal with the enormous amount of stress in their lives," says Dr. Robert Colbert, professor at the University of Connecticut and co-author of the study. "This study shows that something can help immediately and it is easy to implement in any school setting."

One recent study, published in the 2009

issue of the peer-reviewed "Current Issues in Education," followed a group of 10 middle-school students with ADHD who were practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique twice a day at school. After three months, researchers found over 50% reduction in stress and anxiety, and improvements in ADHD behavior regulation.

"The effect was much greater than we expected," says Dr. Sarina Grosswald, Ed.D., a

Time program. "It changed the whole climate of the school, says principal Dr. George Rutherford, a highly regarded D.C. Educator. "It was just beautiful. The academic achievement has gone up, and behavioral problems have gone down. I could never work in a school that doesn't have the TM Quiet Time program." One student at the Ideal Academy reports, "I notice I haven't been mad for a while, since I learned TM. I used to get in fights and talk to

beings. Meeting these students, for me, was the proof that Consciousness-Based Education is a profoundly good thing for our schools and for our world."

Parallel to the Quiet Time program just described is an ongoing DLF initiative to bring Transcendental Meditation to needy students in higher education. But that's another potent David Lynch solution in education worth exploring another day! ■



George Washington University-trained cognitive learning specialist and lead researcher on the study. "The children also showed improvements in attention, working memory, and organization." The study was funded by grants from the Abramson Family Foundation and the David Lynch Foundation.

At the Ideal Academy Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., students from 5th grade through 12th grade now practice the TM Quiet

people behind their back. And it helps me not to get distracted."

"I have had the pleasure of meeting many students who are "diving within" and experiencing Consciousness-Based Education," sums up DLF founder David Lynch. "These students are all unique individuals, very much themselves. They are amazing, self sufficient, wide-awake, energetic, blissful, creative, powerfully intelligent and peaceful human

TM in the UK

The City & London TM Centre has fortnightly introductory talks to TM.

T: 0845 226 9321. E: michael@tm-city.com W: www.tm-city.com

ENGLAND: T: 01695 51213. E: tminfo@maharishi.org.uk W: www.t-m.org.uk

SCOTLAND: T: 0131 668 1649. E: enquiries@tm-scotland.org W: www.tmscotland.org

WALES: T: 02920 568 992. W: www.t-m.org.uk/meditation-cardiff

References

David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace www.davidlynchfoundation.org

The Transcendental Meditation program www.tm.org and www.t-m.org.uk

ADHD, the Mind and the TM technique www.adhd-tm.org

Maharishi University of Management www.mum.edu

Ask the Doctors-Specialists answer your questions www.askthedoctors.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Norman Zierold has authored many books during his career, among them: *The Child Stars*, Coward-McCann, 1965; *Little Charlie Ross*, Little, Brown, 1967; *Three Sisters In Black*, Little, Brown, 1968, Recipient of a Special Edgar Allen Poe Award; *The Moguls*, Coward-McCann, 1969; *Garbo, Stein and Day*, 1969; *The Skyscraper Doom*, Lenox Hill Press, 1972; and *Sex Goddesses of the Silent Screen*, Henry Regnery, 1973.