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# The Experience of Kelee Meditation: How It Impacts My Nursing Practice

By Sarah Babcock BSN, RN-BC

I have wanted to be a nurse my whole life, and today I am a certified pain management RN. I work in the Pain Procedure Clinic caring for people with chronic pain, and I can't imagine doing anything else. My aspiration is to help people in their time of need...I know that I am doing my heart's work, so why did it give me stomach pains, headaches, and tears instead of the joy I anticipated? It turns out it was because I was in my head and not in my heart. For years I moved through my workdays feeling anxious and stressed out. I was jealous, and maybe resentful, of the peace that other people seemed to achieve so effortlessly. I have always identified myself as an empathetic nurse, and I thought that was the way to best serve my patients. Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes. Unfortunately, when I put myself in my patients' shoes I only ended up feeling their pain and suffering, and then I could no longer be of any use to them. I thought about my patients day and night. Occasionally I would find time for myself to get a massage, pedicure or even a walk along the ocean, but I was still carrying a high level of stress. Kelee meditation has helped me to move from empathy to compassion, where I am drawing people in to my openheartedness by exhibiting harmony in my being.

I am very efficient at work. I have a great memory and can recall the mutually established goals that my patient and I had set at our previous appointment. That hasn't changed. What has changed is that now I can separate myself from my patients so that I don't take on their suffering as my own. The best way to care for my patients is to feel what is occurring as we communicate and to trust what I am sensing.

This isn't my first attempt to find peace of mind in my work. I took the eight-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Course in 2009. I enjoyed it and found it really beneficial. MBSR taught me to appreciate the present moment; to leave the past behind, and not try to anticipate or control the future. I practiced fairly consistently for the first three months; and then the busyness of life got in the way. MBSR requires 45 minutes to an hour daily, and little by little I practiced less often until I was back where I started. I still am mindful in my life—minus the long daily meditation. When I am out walking I see the sky and the clouds, I even can taste the air. I practice mindful eating, and I am generally more aware of the moment; but without the daily practice my work stress was no better than before. Clearly, I was on the right track. I just needed to find the best method for me.

In April 2013, I was privileged to take part in a study introducing Kelee® Meditation to UCSD nurses. It was ten weeks of learning and reflection, and I could feel myself getting lighter with each practice. With Kelee® Meditation I meditate for five minutes, and then I reflect and enter my thoughts in a journal twice daily. Kelee® Meditation is a practice where we focus our conscious awareness at the top of the head. Conscious awareness is our thoughts about external stimuli that are swirling around in our brain, but we can direct them inward. Then, we move the conscious awareness down until we reach the surface of the mind, allowing it to spread out and settle. The surface of the mind is the division between the lesser and greater Kelee®, between intellect and deeper states of mind and emotion. Lastly, we further drop down



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into a still point. This is the greater Kelee® that is associated with emotion and feeling processes. It is where the emotions of love and contentment are experienced. (Rathbun, 2010).

I would have never guessed that taking ten minutes twice a day could have such a profound influence on my being. Being mind-centered has helped me appreciate what I am doing as opposed to planning my next move. I used to meet my patients and now I greet them. I am more open, which I always thought came from the brain but it is actually my heart that is open. I know that now I give my best to

my patients. I still provide them with instruction on self-care to promote their health and well-being, and they may take it or leave it; but I know that I have done my best and that is all that matters. Letting go of patterns of behavior is not easy, but it is well worth it. I am consistent in my practice but that does not mean that my practice is always what I want it to be. I am learning to remove underlying triggers instead of temporary positive thinking. I am learning to be unaffected by the external stimuli that I cannot control. Nothing has changed in my workplace except me. Yet, I have better morale and

feel healthier and my patients, doctors, and co-workers have felt it. More importantly, I have finally found the joy I always imagined I would find in my work.

## REFERENCE

R.W. Rathbun (2010). *Troubleshooting the mind: Understanding the basic principles of the Kelee*. Quiescence Publishing

## About the Study

# Kelee Meditation Research at UC San Diego Healthy System

By Paige Burtson MSN, RN, NEA-BC

“The Kelee® and Kelee meditation (KM) were developed and founded by Ron W. Rathburn. KM is a unique form of meditation that is easy to learn and requires only about 10 minutes twice a day to perform. The goal and discipline of KM is the development of a one-pointed stillness of mind.” (Lee & Rathburn 2013) Dr. Daniel Lee, a UC San Diego Health System Physician with the Owen Clinic, conducted a research study on the effects of a 12-week Kelee Meditation course in HIV-1 infected patient on stress, anxiety, and depression. Dr. Lee found that KM produced statistically significant improvements in stress, anxiety and depression.

Dr. Lee presented the results of his study and how his personal experience as a KM practitioner has positively impacted his own professional practice to the 6East Unit-Based Practice Council. As a nurse researcher, I have a particular interest in examining what resources leaders can provide to nurses to support them in their professional practice.

In 2011, an IRB-approved research study was started in collaboration with Dr. Lee to examine the impact of a KM course among clinical nursing staff. The Human Resources Department has financially supported the project by funding a KM instructor through the UC San Diego Health System Wellness Program. The research project is still in progress, but early results have shown an increase in compassion satisfaction, and a decrease in stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and compassion fatigue among an experimental group of nurses when compared to a control group.

The research study is still ongoing, so look for enrollment opportunities in your email or Making the Rounds.

## Reference:

Lee, D.L. & Rathburn, R.W. (2013). *The Kelee Meditation Medical Study*. San Diego, CA.



**Paige Burtson, RN, MSN, NEA-BC**, is currently the Associate Director of Medical Surgical Specialties at Hillcrest. Paige holds a BA in Ecology from UCSD and a BSN and MSN from SDSU. Paige's certification is in executive nursing leadership.