

**Schools of Thought****Nataki Talibah****Schoolhouse of Detroit**

(K-8), a public charter school, has taught TM to hundreds of students.

Chelsea School (K-8),

a private school for children with ADHD in Silver Spring, Maryland, uses TM to reduce anxiety.

Public high schools in Augusta, Georgia,

saw reduced blood pressure in African-American teens who meditated.

And for the past 20 years, all of Fairfield, Iowa's

Maharishi

School (K-12) students have practiced TM and have scored in the top 1 percent of the nation on standardized tests.

Are the Kids All Right?

Iconoclastic filmmaker David Lynch is still making movies, but he's also teaching students about what he believes is the path to true bliss: transcendental meditation. His goal? To get the stressed-out to "dive within." / By Ellise Pierce / Illustration by Monica Hellström

LAST SUMMER, AMERICA'S MOST AVANT-GARDE filmmaker, once dubbed by *Time* magazine the "Czar of Bizarre," announced his newest project: the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace. As the creative force behind the films *The Elephant Man* (for which he received a best director Oscar nomination), *Eraserhead*, *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive*, and the television series *Twin Peaks*, Lynch attributes much of his success as a filmmaker to his transcendental meditation (TM) practice. But his creativity isn't limited to either the large or small screen. Born in Missoula, Montana, Lynch also writes music and is a painter and photographer. In between all this, he meditates.

The Indian guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi introduced TM, known as "diving within," a half-century ago. Researchers have found that TM practiced twice a day for 15 to 20 minutes can, among other health benefits, reduce blood pressure and improve brain function. Studies also have shown that TM can enhance creativity and increase test scores among students who practice it.

Through his new nonprofit, Lynch's goal is to give every child in the U.S. the opportunity to learn and practice TM. He believes that high school and college students can combat fatigue and stress with a simple meditation session once a day.

Since the announcement of his foundation, Lynch has

been on a speaking tour of 50 colleges and universities, talking to students about meditation. He's now in the middle of filming a new movie, *Inner Empire*, starring Laura Dern, Harry Dean Stanton, and Justin Theroux. HEMISPHERES journeyed to Lynch's Hollywood home to talk with him about his other lifelong passion.

Q: What's the purpose of the Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace?

A: The first goal is to get 10,000 students meditating in the U.S. to create a wave of peace in America that will be a catalyst for peace in the world. It will be a peace-meditating group like a factory that pumps peace around the world.

Q: Why TM?

A: The reason I'm out talking to people is life just gets better when you start to experience your own ocean of pure-bliss consciousness from within. It's the unity of all parts and forces of creation, and it's the source of all matter. ►

"Transcendental meditation is the superhighway to the gold. It causes negativity to go like sunlight causes darkness to go."

There's a saying, "Know thyself," and that knowledge is available to anyone. It's an easy, supremely profound technique that allows any human to dive within.

Q: Why are you so interested in working with students?

A: Today, with school violence on the rise and with metal detectors in many schools, classroom stress is at an all-time high. So, at some inner-city schools, children are diving within. These kids are happy. This is from the inside, and it grows, and these kids excel. This consciousness is palpable.

Q: What's your perspective on the misconceptions people have about TM?

A: Their fear is a fear of the unknown. They think it's some sort of religion or mind control. Whatever. Mind control to me is negativity. This frees the mind. People from every religious group practice TM. It's not against any religion.

Q: Most of us have lived in the midst of one war or another. Doesn't peace sound like an abstract concept?

A: It does, and that's the weirdest thing. There have been so many thousands of years without it. It doesn't seem like it will ever happen. But wait a minute, if this kind of intense happiness could be felt, there wouldn't be any conflict in the world. This is so powerful. This bliss is physical, emotional, spiritual happiness. It gives a thrill of fulfillment and energy.

Q: You also want to establish seven Universities of World Peace. What, exactly, will they be like?

A: Imagine an organization with at least 8,000 students. Imagine them all knowing how to dive within, enliven the unity within themselves, and know themselves. Then they do their program together in a group, and that group is very powerful. Eventually, they are bringing harmony and coherence and peace in the world.

Q: You've been practicing TM for more than 30 years. Do you remember the first time you meditated?

A: Like it was yesterday. My sister called, and she had started TM, and I'd been looking into different forms of meditation. And there was something in my sister's voice—less stress, and happiness, and there was some sort of little lilt in her voice like something good. And I said, "I gotta have that."

Q: Where did you learn?

A: I went down to the Los Angeles Transcendental Meditation Center, and I had an introductory lecture, and I started meditating right after that. I got a mantra, which is a very specific sound-thought. I just closed my eyes and started that mantra. I describe it as like being in an elevator and they cut the cables—down I went into pure bliss. Before I got interested in meditation, I thought meditators were wasting time.

Q: How much meditation do you do each day?

A: Twenty minutes in the morning and 20 at night. I meditate in my office and in a chair in another room.

Q: Is there anything special about the room you use?

A: No. It has two chairs and a lamp. You say goodbye to your room and dive within. That's where the real beauty is.

Q: What does it feel like, this beauty through meditation?

A: It's the superhighway to the gold. People think that peace is the absence of war, but peace is the absence of all negativity. This causes negativity to go like sunlight causes darkness to go.

Q: I read that you drink lots of coffee. How much do you drink in a day?

A: I try to get 20 in.

Q: Cups? You know, there are people who say that caffeine is evil.

A: It's a funny world.

Q: Your films have been called everything from avant-garde to weird. Do you feel misunderstood?

A: No. My films are like all films. There's no one film that pleases everyone. I just happen to love films that have abstractions in them. I like a concrete story, but I like a film that holds abstractions. This is what cinema can do. With sound and sequencing of time, it's its own language. With my films, people have to use their own intuition and own interpretation. And people aren't used to having to do this in film.

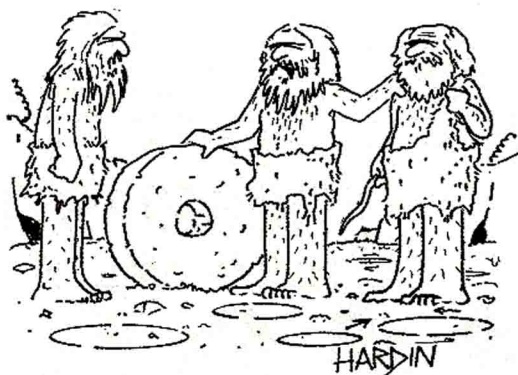
Q: How would you like to be known? As a great filmmaker, as someone who helped spread peace throughout the world, or as something else entirely?

A: I'm a helper. That's what I am. The reason I'm out talking to people is that life just gets better and better when you start to experience your own ocean of pure bliss.

Q: Anything that you'd like to add?

A: Have a good trip. Think about what you've read. See if it rings a bell inside. If you want to be part of the David Lynch Foundation, to bring meditation to students, and work toward real peace on earth, let's do it—together. We need help, we need support, and we need to change the world. ■

Ellise Pierce, a Dallas-based writer who specializes in travel, fashion, and style, has contributed to Newsweek, Jane, and other magazines.



"To be honest, I never would have invented the wheel if not for Urg's groundbreaking theoretical work with the circle."