

I was very excited to be among the first group of students to participate in an accredited Mind-Body Medicine class at the UWSOM. Before starting the class, I had my own understandings and experiences of the impact of mind on body (and body on mind), but I had never explored that connection in any thorough way. Moreover, I had never realized how *practically* the therapeutic potentials of the mind-body connection could be realized such that they could be incorporated into a weekly routine and could lead to improved health and well-being.

In the second class session, we used thermisters to show that the power of meditation alone can be used to raise one's body temperature. I was able to raise my body temperature over 10 degrees F! And this is a tremendously useful skill to have! How many times have I been out in the cold and just shivered?

The visualization meditation was a superb experience as well. It highlighted the power of mind to visualize healing landscapes. And, with the additional exercise of imagining an "all-knowing" presence there whispering into your ear, it taught me just how much untapped wisdom lies in one's subconscious mind. Much credit for this goes to the skillful and artful technique of the facilitators to bring about this consciousness shift.

The shaking meditation was also one of the highlights of the class. It reminds me of the practices of "whirling dervishes." Sustained physical activity somehow leads to a shift in consciousness. Amazing!

I could go on philosophizing about what the possible mechanisms might be at work for bringing about these changes, but I do not think that really speaks to the fundamental point of this class: you have to try it to believe it! That is what I learned in the class. No amount of philosophizing, psychoneuroimmunologizing, or otherwise scientifically analyzing can substitute for the actual experience of practicing these meditation techniques and realizing the benefits of them. For me, the benefits were clear thinking, stress relief, and taking time for relaxation.

I am very happy that I had the opportunity to participate in this wonderful course. The instructors planned the course with great care and delicacy. And this came across in my experience of the class. I hope a class like this would continue for others to experience; I hope that a class like this could be expanded to a year in length so that theories and experiments could be taught and further exploration of the immensely important mind body connection could be taught to medical students.