

# Three Cheers for Coach Prakash

by Barbara Blank



Life Coaching teaches how to focus. Learning to focus is partially achieved by learning to meditate--which is achieved by un-focusing.

It sounds like the ultimate oxymoron, but what it amounts to is finding a balance between your business and personal lives. Imbalance and having no direction--or being pulled in several directions--is stressful and exhausting.

Dr. Om Prakash, whose name means "Light of the Divine Being," guides people toward finding their own balance.

The 85-year-old clinical psychologist is currently switching his Irving-based practice to "life coaching." Prakash is his own best advertisement; he exudes calmness. He also believes "retirement," as in doing nothing, means dying--emotionally, mentally and physically.

When Prakash was nineteen, he joined Gandhi's Free India movement in the 1940s, urging independence from British rule. He learned meditation while trying to avoid arrest, although he eventually spent six months in a government prison.

By the time he was released, he had a goal: to dedicate his life to helping people. He finished earning his physics degree, then taught high school while earning a Masters degree in Psychology. And that is what Life--and Business--Coaching is all about: Setting goals, motivation, and maintaining balance. As Prakash explains, life coaches don't solve problems; they ask questions that lead you to finding your own answers--answers you already have but can't access because your "Gremlins" get in the way.

"Gremlins" are internal, self-defeating voices. Once identified, they lose power, and you can choose to move forward. The essential key is Choice--whether that choice is conscious or not.

Prakash calls this "possibility thinking." Unlike "positive thinking," which doesn't work (and, in fact, can set you up for failure), "possibility thinking" opens you to choices you might not have considered before.

In conjunction with "mindfulness meditation," it helps to clear your mind, reduce stress, and restore your energy and balance. At its simplest, "mindfulness meditation" takes five minutes, and can be done anywhere, several times a day.

It helps to understand the three steps involved in making Life Coaching and Meditation a joint venture.

- 1.) Behavioral Therapy: understanding that the way you think is the way you feel, and vice versa. If you think you can't do something, you probably can't.
- 2.) Coaching for Oneness: You are your most important resource--which should be obvious, but we become too scattered to be effective. Learn to remain focused on your goals.
- 3.) Mindfulness, or Present Moment Awareness. Be here now. Pay attention to what you're doing. That way you won't find your car keys in the freezer because you were a thousand miles away when you walked in your own front door. Your life is always here and now.

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# **I was a Guinea Pig for Meditation Coaching**

by **Barbara Blanks**

Dr. Prakash asked me to be his student in a videotaping of him teaching Five-Minute Meditation. By the time I arrived at his office via Central and LBJ, I figured he'd have to put me in a blender to get me to loosen up enough to blink my eyes and unclench my hands and jaw.

But by the time the camera man arrived, I'd had a chance to relax a bit. Dr. Prakash had me lean back in a recliner and close my eyes. He started a tape of Indian music that sounded a bit like coffee percolating, but cleaner, clearer and more rhythmic.

He quietly told me to slow my breathing; let it come naturally. (30 seconds to a minute.) Then he told me to notice the cool inhale, the warm exhale. (30 seconds to a minute.) Feel my breath moving up to my Third Eye (or Center of Christian Consciousness); don't try to block thoughts; let them flow out and away. (It's only when you hang onto thoughts that they control you.) And then he was quiet.

I can only tell you that I was aware of peripheral thoughts, but mostly I became part of an expansive, pure darkness that felt safe and comforting.

Eventually, Dr Prakash told me I could open my eyes when I was ready. Hmmm, well, I didn't want to open my eyes. I was happy where I was--and I stayed there.

Finally, he repeated himself. Well, shoot. I still didn't want to open my eyes, but about then I felt like I was part of the music--like the music and I were streamers of ribbons rising up and rippling on a stream of air, or like streams of bubbles rising in an aquarium.

I started smiling. When I tried to open my eyes, my eyelids kept fluttering with the music; I started laughing because I couldn't keep my eyes open. When at last they did stay open, I felt completely rested and refreshed. It was amazing. Not even driving George Bush in rush hour traffic--after initially going in the wrong direction--took away that feeling of calmness. Well, for about five minutes...

Barbara Blanks runs in circles. Please try to catch up with her at [www.barbara-blanks.com](http://www.barbara-blanks.com)