

In the one-bedroom apartment of my childhood, my mother (Daniela) had a sacred spot in the closet where she would meditate in silence. As a toddler, I would sit cross-legged with my eyes closed, imitating her. Sensing my enthusiasm, she began to take me frequently to her meditation center, the Devanand Yoga Center, where members practice Mantra Meditation. As I got older, it became my second home. Two years ago, I decided to become a member of the center. Since then, I have been meditating for an hour every day. The inner wisdom I gained due to this meditation practice has been integral to my sense of self.

Before meditating, superficial issues absorbed me. I worried about how others perceived me and I constantly compared myself to my peers. Stress prevented me from concentrating on anything. However, sitting in silence for long periods of time gave me the opportunity to practice using my conscience, in order to make better decisions. The superficial issues that consumed me became less important than my personal growth. I found myself quitting social media, and no longer listening to music that only agitated me. I also aimed to be more considerate of others and lessen my jealous tendencies. I began to perform random acts of kindness whenever possible, such as guiding my peers through an assignment or helping my neighbors carry their groceries. With more meaningful internet searches, I grasped the detrimental practices of the meat industry and became a vegetarian. I had enough self-control to make changes in my life, and although this process seemed to isolate me from my peers, I was eager to keep growing. The world finally slowed down, and I was able to breathe.

Not only did I meditate for thirty minutes each morning and afternoon, but I also attended retreats at Greynolds Park with the Devanand Yoga Center. I fasted for three days, and I meditated for eight hours daily in absolute silence. We were not allowed to speak or have our phones. Putting aside my meaningless worries brought the rest of the world into focus. I reside in Miami, which will be partially underwater in a few decades due to sea-level rise. I am also a child of immigrants. When I visit my family in Argentina I see the melting glaciers and forest fires that endanger their homes. The retreats gave me a different perspective on the world at large, which helped me recognize the dire importance of climate change.

Immediately after my first retreat, I became vegan. I integrated zero waste items into my daily routines, such as biodegradable utensils. I became Treasurer and Planner of the Environmental Club at my school, where I organized fundraisers and raised awareness about the climate crisis. I attended protests every weekend with Fridays For Future (an international climate movement). We peacefully held up hand-made signs, gathered in front of the town hall, and marched through Lincoln Road (a well-known shopping street in Miami Beach). I even organized transportation to these events for fellow members of the club. I helped the movement grow until our city finally declared a climate emergency.

At the same time, climate change became central to my design work. This is evident in Eco-Hen, a project where I completely redesigned egg packaging, making it biodegradable and reusable. I also created the Recycled Chair, which uses cardboard and reused magazines to build a functional chair that combines structure, sustainability, and playfulness. I aim to create eco-friendly products that give everyone the chance to experience the world mindfully.

I am thrilled that this journey is not over. In the past two years, I have made profound positive changes in my life by embracing the inner wisdom of my conscience. Now through design, I aim to help mend our relationship with the Earth and turn global attention to sustainability. The future is uncertain, but as long as I keep meditating, I have the tools to change the world.