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H O M E T O W N H E R O
Thirty Minutes at a Time

Laurie Martin's programs help heal our healers

By providing 30-minute lunchtime meditations, longtime Naples yoga instructor and life coach Laurie Martin is helping nursing staff at area hospitals deal with the stress of COVID-19 and caring for patients. She also provides these services to other businesses, near and far.

Since Martin's courses have gone online this past year, employee attendance has risen, says her Hometown Hero nominator Cindy Dobyns, who adds: "Seems many of us could use a 30-minute meditation these days."

Martin, a certified life coach, yoga teacher and wellness provider (certified through the Florida Department of Nursing) offers three such programs that cover mindful living, healthy communication to resolve conflict, and letting go/reclaiming your power. In her 20 years of helping others, she knows these meditative practices build intuitive trust, self-reliance, self-love and personal empowerment.

"How to get into a state of peace to observe, not react ... connecting with your body," Martin says, explaining that the interactive sessions involve listening and visualizing, exploring unconditional love language, reviewing belief systems, adopting healthier boundaries and ways of being to achieve a higher perspective of self.

"It's a beautiful thing that hospitals have wellness programs and open their doors to help their staff members become more loving and mindful," Martin says. Even in regard to their inherent roles as health care providers, those involved in her coursework learn to respond to life situations with greater balance and focus.

"We all have triggers. I'm really good at helping people relax," Martin says succinctly. The intent is to build more mindful and resilient practitioners.

"Close your eyes. Take a deep breath. Say, 'I see you,' to your heart. Imagine your heart is smiling at you. Then you can see a smile in every cell of your body."

In this two-minute exercise, her students learn to connect to the present peacefully, often bringing tears to their eyes.

"You can do it many times a day," Martin says. It's a practice to be more mindful. To be more loving. To observe how we attach our emotions to external things."

Laurie Martin

Even as she served as vice president of worldwide events for a major tech company, Martin was drawn to her calling as a healer. She earned her yoga certification and wrote the first of her three books. She resigned from that high-powered job one day, and out of fear, asked to have it back the next. Ultimately, her passion for what she does now was greater than a need to hang on to a big position with a nice paycheck.

Her passion for wellness and sharing her gift was stronger than her fear of the unknown.

"That's why I'm doing this. It touches me," she says.

Whether she's helping folks learn to relax, realize their impact on others, overcome rejection or recall their dreams, she reminds her students that the unconditional love of self has little to do with the outside world and its distractions. Still, self-love takes practice and self-awareness.

In hospital settings, she encourages her students to take two quiet minutes every two hours — in another room, in the car or while walking — to breathe and connect with their hearts.

"It's a life path that feeds us," Martin says. "It totally feeds me."

To learn more, visit www.smileacrossyourheart.com.