

Choose, Change & Become- Living In Style Service Report



Summary

The Choose, Change & Become-Living In Style retreat was held at Earth Science Dept Hall, Manipur University. There were 65 participants for the retreat. The Works & Transport Minister, Mr. Kh. Ratankumar inaugurated it. He shared his experiences of leading a stress-free life after practicing Rajyoga meditation. He also encouraged the youth to be clear in their goals. He attended the energizer and the first activity with so much enthusiasm.

Purpose

The retreat will give adults and youth the opportunity to spend time in a relaxed atmosphere, to talk and to listen to each other, to get more comfortable with each other and to explore ways to discover their spiritual DNAs.

Goals

Make Manipur more peaceful through Spirituality

Gather creative ideas

Meet new people to understand their know their idea of style

Think and learn about spiritual lifestyles

Figure out how to get youth in spirituality

Mingle and have fun

To make aware that spirituality is not boring but a lifestyle

Participants

20-35 years of age youth mainly research scholars participated in the retreat. All of them new to this spiritual university. The audience were open to learning and co-operative throughout the retreat.

Energizer: To activate the energy level of the participants.

The energizer gave the opportunity to open up with everyone.



Exercise 1: Ice breaker



As the music was on the participants were asked to move around and when the music stopped they were supposed to meet one person whom they did not

know and share their style statement

Session 1 : The whole group was divided into groups of 5 – 6 each and were invited to ponder and share amongst themselves on the question 'What is your idea of Style?'. Some brilliant opinions emerged and it showed that the group was already quite evolved as all the answers had the element of values in them. From the discussion Sr. Ranjana highlighted the following elements of style

- *To be different and unique*
- *Confident and high self esteem*
- *Creative*
- *Uninfluenced and a trend setter*
- *One who is noticed for being different*
- *Originality*

The following statements formed the basis of Living in style

Style is not just about what you wear but what you think about yourself

Style is not just about how you look but how you feel about yourself

Style is not just about what you do but who you are

Style is not just to blindly follow but to creatively lead the way

She went on to explain further that our Lifestyle is influenced by our idea of style. Our choices, decisions, quality of interactions and relationships are all influenced by our sense of who we are. Because our sense of who we are creates our destiny. The eternal connection between awareness and destiny was explained with many examples and stories which brought out the truth in a very lucid and yet effective way.

Session 2: The participants were then invited to pick up 2 random pieces of paper and in groups of 5 – 6 each were encouraged to create a meaningful story with a moral that linked all the pieces of paper. The exercise was a lot of fun and took around 25 minutes to complete and then each group shared their stories in the large group. It was interesting to see how all stories had an element of suppression and social pressures that they were all facing due to antisocial problems in the state but however all the stories had a happy ending and very strong foundation of values that underpinned all the events and linked them together.



Learnings from the activity

One of the things about living in style is to live in the present. When we started with the story we didn't know what the end would be and that kept us motivated to finish the story well similarly not knowing is the greatest motivator. So live each moment to the fullest as it comes by without worrying about the future or letting the past influence the present.



- *My destiny is in my hands I can choose to weave the random events of my life into a beautiful meaningful story by infusing it with pure energy.*
- *Values are the foundation on which my life is built.*

Session 3 : Panel Discussion - This was the post lunch session a panel discussion with 4 BK youth on stage (BK Imo, BK Jenny, BK Sharda) and Sr. Debshree coordinated the discussion. Some very deep and heart touching experiences came out and the panelists in a very simple way answered questions like 'Can I be both spiritual and fashionable at the same time?'; 'Does adopting a spiritual lifestyle mean I have to compromise on some of the things I enjoy like watching television, spending time with friends, shopping, making money, good food etc...' One question that stood out and which then led into meditation was 'If God is the one who gives unconditional love then does that mean I don't need to marry another human being?'



Session 4 : Meditation – Sr. Ranjana answered the above question explaining that meditation is the process of connecting with the Supreme and in a marriage when both individuals are connected with the Supreme then each one ‘gives into’ the relationship and does not expect and hence the relationship moves from a space of needing, wanting, desiring and asking into a space of giving unconditionally which in reality is love. Sr. Urmila then led the group into a beautiful meditation commentary in Manipuri which was an experience of Gods love and connection.



Session 5 : Om Café – The Om Café as always was a highlight and the participants were encouraged to express what they had felt and learnt during the day in the form of songs, dances and skit. The presentations were very creative and heart warming indeed and brought everyone very close to each other like a close knit spiritual family. At the end the atmosphere was filled with a feeling of love and a sense of belongingness. The participants were given blessings and write-ups by Sr. Nilima, centre incharge of BKs Manipur.



