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CLOSE UP

A meditative approach to life



Bharat Jayaraman regularly teaches a class in Integrated Amrita Meditation to UB faculty and staff. Photo: NANCY J. PARISI

By JULIE WESOLOWSKI

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When he's not teaching the principles behind computer science and engineering, Bharat Jayaraman, professor and former department chair, can be found meditating. A practitioner of meditation for 35 years, he teaches the Integrated Amrita Meditation (IAM) technique regularly at UB to anyone who is interested.

Originally from Bangalore, Jayaraman learned meditation as a graduate student in India. He found that it greatly enhanced his attentiveness and concentration to his work. As he worked on his Ph.D. at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, he says that meditation was enormously beneficial for him. "I could think more clearly and be more creative."

But Jayaraman believes that everyone needs to be more attentive, creative and productive in whatever they are doing. "No matter what walk of life we are in, we could all benefit from thinking more clearly and being more calm and focused," he explains.

The goal of meditation is to be constantly in a state of full awareness. In the practice of a meditation technique, participants retreat inward and reconnect with themselves. Jayaraman says it doesn't matter what you are

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Bharat Jayaraman
Professor, Department of
Computer Science and
Engineering

doing— whether cooking, cleaning, dancing or studying— the practice of meditation helps you perform the activity with greater awareness.

A UB faculty member since 1989, Jayaraman recently spent a half-year sabbatical as a visiting professor at the university founded by Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi—the founder of the IAM technique. In India, he had the opportunity to study the Indian educational system, where he says the number of good schools today is disproportionately small to the number of deserving students. When he came back from his sabbatical, Jayaraman was convinced that UB could partner with schools in India so that UB professors could reach more international students. He's now involved in creating a new collaborative computer science program on "embedded systems" jointly with Amrita University, which he hopes will launch in the fall.

Since 2007, Jayaraman and his wife, Padma, '92 M.S., have taught more than 150 UB faculty and staff members the IAM technique. In the fall, they will offer refresher classes to those who have learned the IAM technique before, as well as teach new classes for those interested in learning the IAM technique for the first time.

Jayaraman thinks everyone can get something out of meditation. "We think more clearly. We make better decisions and we are happier in our relationships," he says.

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