

Alternative Spa Series: New Yorkers' 'New Reality' Meditation at the Mezzanine Spa

By [Kelly Hushin](#)
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Many ideas float to the surface when we think about meditation. We hear the mantra OM. We visualize ourselves sitting cross-legged on the floor, hands rested, palms up on knees. Our eyes are closed. Can you hear Enya's music wafting through the air? Now for a reality check... we live in NYC, full of distraction; the faint but ever-present hum of the subway, incessant taxi-horn-blowing as high heels tap against pavement, construction machines clanking, and Blackberrys and iPhones ringing—their owners' yapping.

Meditation...ummm right.

This is New York. If you live here and want to relax, it's not going to be easy. To take a serious stab at meditation, we have to sit down, and create our own 'new reality'. Hence, the creation of **NewReality**; the concept and treatment method founded by **Dale Ann Springer** in 2006. The NewReality program uses **Creative Visualization/Relaxation (CVR)** to facilitate relaxation and meditation through various methodologies, which include topics like stress relief, smoking cessation, weight management and improving your golf game.



Dale Ann Springer, Founder

We all know that meditation is good for you," said **Dr. Laurie Polis**, esthetic dermatologist and director of the **Mezzanine Spa** in Soho, where the NewReality treatment is offered. "The problem in New York is that we have the mantra 'OM' before you meditate. We'd say 'OM' to patients and everything led to 'OMigod I have to pick up the laundry,' or 'OMigod I have to get the kids...' etc. People can't get there; they can't get to that meditative state. Getting there is not easy." That's where the CVR programs come in."



"Dale Ann realized that the right impulses to the brain allow your brain to take that jet plane to get there, to that meditative state," said Polis. "She devised a way through a certain pace of lights to allow your chemistry to relax and align." The whole concept rests on a device called the **NXTlynk™**. At first glance it seems almost like a contraption from the movie "Back to the Future". A pair of goggles with little bulbs set inside attaches to the main hub, where the desired program is set. Out of the same hub comes a pair of headphones which provide the sound that guides you through any one of the more than 130 sessions.

I was apprehensive while I waited for the process to begin. Not because I was afraid of the intense lights that would soon be flashing in front of my closed eyelids. And not because the sound of a voice mixed with these lights might induce a somewhat hypnotic state. I was apprehensive because I thought; “Unless this machine is going to knock me out, there’s no way I’m relaxing.” Between the 14,495 other things I had to juggle that day, I was not convinced that any lights or sounds, no matter how soothing, would do the trick.

I had chosen the “Stress Free Mind, Healthy Body” program in hopes that perhaps I’d be able to let go – at least temporarily – of everything that was whizzing through my mind. When Dr. Polis first placed the goggles over my eyes and the lights started flashing, I thought I might have some sort of seizure – it turns out if you’re prone to them, CVR might be risky. But after only about 30 seconds, I was focusing on the sound of the voice, telling me how I should begin the process of releasing my stresses.



After about 15 minutes, it was as though my mind and body were as one. It was similar to the feeling you get when you’re almost asleep and then have a sort of “mini-dream” that brings you back to the waking world.

My subconscious felt like it might come out of this “rest” at any moment; I was practically sleeping on a cloud-like bed in a beautiful Soho spa.

As Dr. Polis said, “Time is a premium in New York,” and alas, after my 20-minute attempt at relaxation, I had to return to my 29,802 other tasks for the day (yes, my “to do” list had already gone up).

One might say that the 20-minute session I underwent was a bit of a tease –had I been able to lie for a little while longer, I think I may have experienced the full benefits of CVR. Still, the philosophy of the treatment claims that my 20-minute session (the sessions are usually 20 minutes but in some cases a bit longer) was equivalent to 3-4 hours of sleep. I certainly felt rested, and one step closer to that elusive meditative state.

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Most of his advice was helpful and effective, and if I weren’t such an indecisive perfectionist, one of the exercises in the program would have undoubtedly worked. About halfway through the “Stress Free Mind, Healthy Body” program, you are asked you to recall a recent experience that you’d like to change. He asks you to visualize yourself in the situation and detach yourself from it – to watch it as an observer without any emotion. He then asks you to visualize yourself changing the situation, doing what you wish you had done. Like many single girls might, I imagined a recent scenario with a date in which things could have ended better. But once I pictured that, my mind went reeling over the fact that I probably shouldn’t change the situation because in the long run, that is what was supposed to happen. It made the exercise impossible. So, for any of you single ladies who are thinking about undergoing the treatment, I advise you to stay away from those sorts of thoughts – for as soon as that part was over, and I shook that memory from my head, I was able to better enjoy the guided meditation.

