

heartfulness

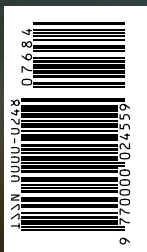
Simply living



How to be
PRESENT

LOOKING INWARD: Daaji on the yogic practices of Pratyahara
HUMAN FLOURISHING: Vasco Gaspar on Mindfulness and beyond

www.heartfulnessmagazine.com



Heartfulness

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Dr Ichak Adizes

Dr Adizes is founder and president of the Adizes Institute, an international consulting company that applies the Adizes Methodology, and is considered to be one of the top consulting organizations in the United States. In addition to consulting to governments throughout the world, Dr. Adizes has worked with a wide variety of companies ranging from start-ups to members of the Fortune 500. He has lectured to executives in more than 50 countries, and has also written 20 books that have been published in 26 languages. Dr Adizes and his wife have six children. In his leisure time, he enjoys playing the accordion and practicing meditation.



Vasco Gaspar

Vasco lives in Portugal. He works as a Human Flourishing Facilitator, inspiring change and transformation in organizations worldwide for a more human and compassionate world. With a toolbox of cutting-edge awareness-based technologies, and trained directly by some of the world's greatest specialists in the fields of Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence, neuroscience and Heartfulness, his dream is to co-create the future, something that he has been doing in different organizations, training people worldwide. He is now dedicated to merging different practices, like Mindfulness, Heartfulness and Presencing, into the service of a greater good: Human Flourishing. What really drives him is his love of nature and animals, being a positive activist for the protection of the planet.



Filiz Emma Soyak

By the age of 5, Filiz knew that visual art was her calling and way of expression. Since beginning her professional career in 2000, Filiz's work has been widely exhibited and collected internationally with over twelve solo exhibitions and more than three-dozen group shows. After becoming a mother in 2016, this significant shift in her life signified a major shift in her work to a more mindful practice and conscious approach. She discovered that her work has not only been a way to process and understand her life, but now, more than ever, is revealing more awareness about living in the present.





Elizabeth Denley, Rishabh Kothari
Meghana Anand, Sylvie Berti Rossi
Genia Catala, Emma Ivaturi

PRESENCE

Dear readers,

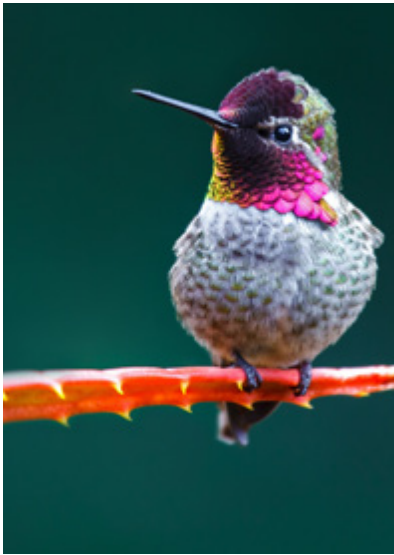
Welcome to our May issue! May Day is the ancient spring celebration from the northern hemisphere honoring the life and fertility of Nature. So during this month, please spare a thought for our beautiful Mother Earth, and honor her in whatever way you can – whether by cleaning up rubbish from your local environment, reducing your use of water, pollutants and plastics, or caring for the many plants and animals in your local environment that are your neighbors.

One of the growing buzzwords in self-development circles is Presencing – sometimes called a combination of being present and sensing. It has been defined as the capacity to connect to the deepest sources of the Self so as to allow knowing to come to the surface. It begs the question: how to access the deepest sources of Self? And how do we know when we have touched the deepest? When our inner journey is infinite, the deepest is not a fixed thing but something we are always moving towards asymptotically. Knowing or enlightenment is therefore also not a fixed thing; we are enlightened up to the point we have reached on the infinite journey. The key is to reach that stage where being present is beyond self-awareness, to where we are oblivious of the Self and swimming in the universal Oneness.

In this issue we hear from a number of our readers on being present. We also hear from Daaji on *Pratyahara*, in his series on Ashtanga Yoga, from Théophile l'Ancien on near death experiences, and from Ravi Venkatesan once again on how to negotiate heartfully in the business world. Filiz Emma Soyak inspires us to meditate through her exquisite 'One Breath' art series, and there is much more ... so please enjoy!

The editors

10



focus

Everyday perspectives
Q&A
On Being Present
12

Feeling
Dr Ichak Adizes
How to Be Present
18

Parenting
Eliane Sainte-Marie
Presence & Authenticity
With Children
21

in the field

Compassion
Stéphan Bertry
The Final Refuge
08

26



thought in action

Business relationships
Ravi Venkatesan
The Heartful Negotiator
part 4
28

Professional balance
Dr Natwar Sharma
How to Stay Balanced at Work
34

38



interview

Human flourishing
Vasco Gaspar
On Meditation, Thoughts and
Experiencing the Inner World
40



46



it changes
everything

Eco toys

Sarah Baldwin

A Different Way to Play - part 2

48

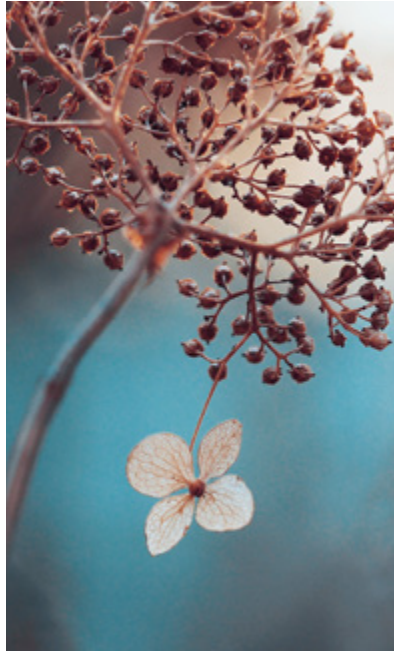
Emotions

Anna Pearce

Simply Elemental

54

58



be
inspired

Life & death

Théophile l'Ancien

Near Death Experiences and Relations

60

Science of spirituality

Ashtanga Yoga - Pratyahara

Daaji on the Yoga of Turning Inward

64

74



taste of life

Meditative art

Filiz Emma Soyak

Uno Spiro - An Art Essay

76

Heartfulness Yogasanas

Gomukhasana

82

Recipe

Simonne Holm

Roasted Cauliflower with Steamed Greens

84

what's up

87

The Final Refuge

8

STÉPHAN BERTRY has been participating in Heartfulness workshops in France with groups of people at risk. Here he shares some of the stages of this new experience and the sensitivity required, and also the special care that was taken with these vulnerable and sometimes traumatized people.

In 2017 in Lyon, a Heartfulness training team joined up with PERLE, a support program for marginalized people who are sheltering in the public accommodation facilities of the Rhône Prefecture. The idea of the project is to help them gain employment. Mostly they are refugees from war-torn countries, as well as homeless and isolated people. PERLE was initiated by the Rhône Prefecture and is coordinated by the Foyer Notre-Dame association for homeless people. It is financed by the European Social Fund and other organizations.

From January to December 2017, Heartfulness workshops were conducted four to ten times a month for groups of ten to twenty people. In total,

250 people of many nationalities from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe and Asia experienced Heartfulness practices. The supervising team of PERLE – the project manager, professional integration manager, communication trainer, psychologist etc. – also took part in these sessions.

It soon became clear that the workshops had to be done in a different way to the classic Heartfulness workshops, and this was mainly because it took a number of meetings to create a heart-to-heart bond and establish a relationship of trust and authenticity between the facilitators and the participants in each group. That was the first step in order to go further into the process and propose the experience of

Heartfulness. We gently started with Heartfulness Relaxation – paramount in this context – followed by a maximum of two to three minutes of meditation.

Even this very short period of meditation was painful for some, as the mere act of closing their eyes and looking inside made deep emotions reappear. It took a lot of understanding and empathy to facilitate those first inner meetings with themselves. For these people, who were mainly concerned with finding ways to survive, this stage was already extraordinary in itself; being able to experience a time of introspection proved to be really precious and exceptional.

Little by little, during the sessions, we went further and were able to extend the meditation time up to thirty minutes for some of the participants. Some were also guided in the practice of Heartfulness Cleaning in groups. We organized the last workshop of the series in the presence of the entire supervising team of the PERLE project. These moments spent together were truly unifying and warm: hearts relaxed, as each witnessed their own experience in total simplicity ... They were just men and women sharing a moment of relaxation and meditation,

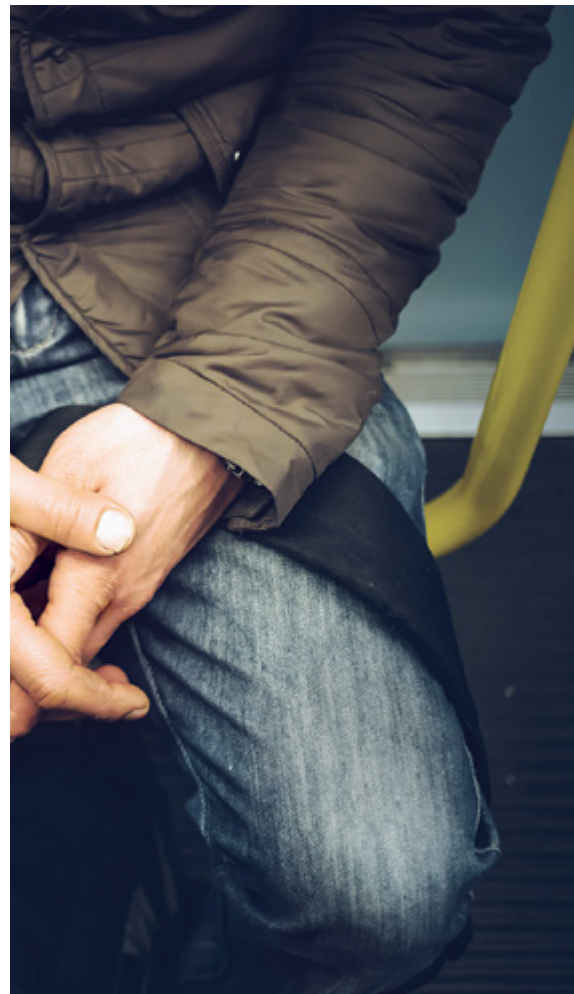
seeking the same thing finally in the heart.

At the beginning of the workshops, Daaji had encouraged us and accompanied us in this process, writing in an email, “Heartfulness can contribute to develop lucidity and maintain hope, find meaning to life, develop an objective to survive and achieve it. I think Heartfulness can help people a lot by supporting their hearts and minds, and keeping them on course despite distress.”

Two weeks ago, while taking the metro in Lyon, I met Mourad in the same train. It was 7:30 p.m. When I went to greet him, a soft smile lit up his face. He was with a friend, also a refugee and a resident of the accommodation facilities of the Rhône Prefecture. Mourad introduced me to his friend and told him how Heartfulness training had taught him to relax in difficult situations.

And there, in the subway, after explaining to his friend that he had found inner resources to face difficulties and overcome obstacles, Mourad told him to close his eyes and listen to his heart ...

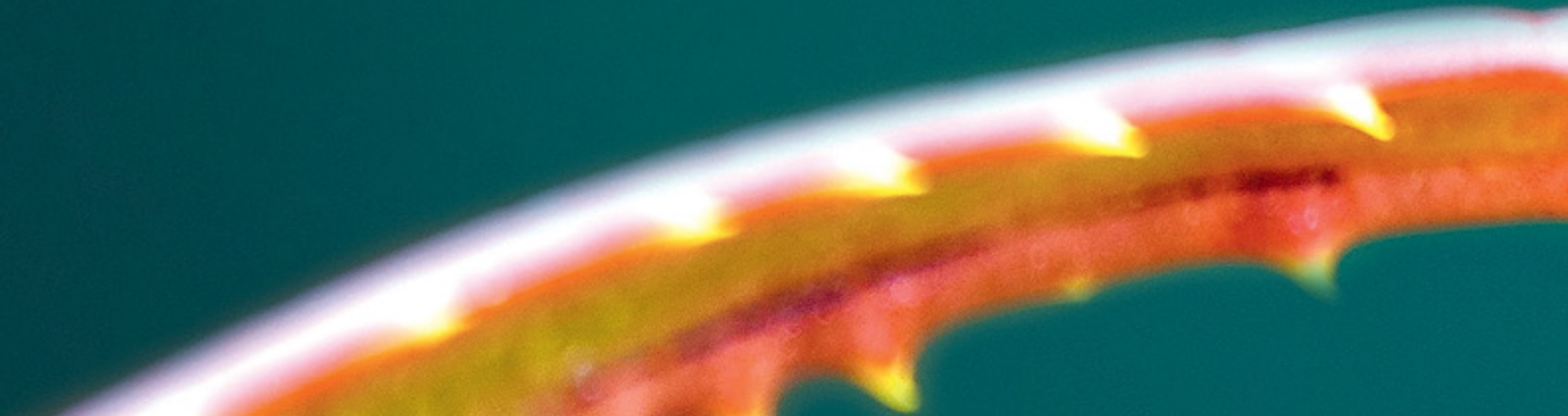
*Heartfulness
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life, develop an
objective to survive
and achieve it.*



FOCUS
being
present

The present moment is filled with joy and happiness.
If you are attentive, you will see it.

Thich Nhat Hanh





Q & r

ON BEING PRESENT

1 What does being present mean to you? How do you feel when you are in the present?

2 How do you stay in the present moment?

3 What would change if people around you were able to be in the present?

To be present is to be able to be me. I thought I had to wear many hats and play different roles. But really being myself has made my work clearer and easier.

Being in the present moment is when you go looking for thoughts but they are not there. I hear and feel the stillness around me or the odd noise in the distance. All my senses are on alert, waiting for a reaction from a deeper place. It makes me realize that Heartfulness has made me present. There have been times when I haven't kept to the practice and I have felt a build-up of heaviness from within, and repeated thoughts and drama play in the mind. I didn't feel like myself, and these were warning signs.

listen and then respond. People would be less selfish and more considerate. There would be less anxiety, stress and less worried people. People would be in sync and work would be done efficiently. I know I would feel less disturbed in their presence. The environment would change. More positivity. More stillness. Therefore more connected.

ALKA PATEL
Teacher
Essex, UK



If everyone around were present, we would listen to each other more. Actually

Being present means being able to feel rather than think, remember, analyze, plan or dream. Being present I do not think what I would like to feel. I simply feel everything that comes my way. I may feel the chill of the air that bites my face. I feel wind that gets under any clothing during the Russian winter. I feel my body!

When I am in the present I can hear birds singing; however when I am deep in my thoughts I may not even notice the most beautiful song of a famous Russian songbird. I feel beauty and life around me only when I come out of thinking and return to life and to the present moment. I see beauty!

When I am in the present I feel my children and their condition right away. I am one with them in such moments. Thus I do not worry about them, do not control, do not teach them. I give away pure love and my attention. I enjoy!

When I am in the present moment along with my beloved, I feel deep love between human beings. I feel his live presence. I see his eyes. I am attentive to what he speaks about. I realize what he keeps silent about. I love!

My thoughts of past and of future just bring about more thoughts. Being in the present moment brings about a gift of Life.

ALLA REVENKO

Owner, Academy of Mindfulness
Kislovodsk, Russia



When we speak of being, the notion of presence is imbedded in the word. Whatever effortlessly we are is presence, be it high or low, inside or out. When traces of effort appear in our being, we are changing into a mode of doing, which in itself is a level of our presence, but an opportunity to let go of it, and feeling what is here. I like this practice of realizing what is unfolding and allowing it in, like a constantly inflating bubble of awareness and kindness. When this state of being comes closest to the pulse of nature, then what remains is sheer compassion for what arises; a place to recognize

that awareness and kindness are not two but really one, or at least closely attached twins. How can we separate knowing from loving in this state, when whatever arises stirs a deep sense of connection in us? Here, our mind has touched its depth where heart resides.

When did we ever leave the present moment? When did the fish leave the water? Or the bird the air? When we have known the infinite depth of silent heartfelt connection with ourselves, then everything is a part of that being. Then our turning away is a small fraction of the ocean of presence we are in, if we allow ourselves to

be that (the turning away) at times, and let it in with a smile. Where else can we go if not here and now? That is all we have, when and where we are, even if spending it indulging in the past or future.

What would change if the people around were in the present? I think we would all laugh, cry and hug a lot more. These are some of the human responses to deep connection within, with others and our surroundings – the joy of being alive and in touch, the tears of feeling the pain of ourselves and others, and the gratitude for being human to feel. Finally, the embracing comes of its own when it does, and it is a bodily response to hold life and its manifests closer to heart, where they came from.

AMIR IMANI

Therapist, Certified
Mindfulness Trainer &
Heartfulness Trainer



Being present means ‘just being’. Like the trees, plants, animals are just there, so also I am just there. I feel very happy to be in the present. Carefree, joyful, attending to things that need to be done, with no thought of likes and dislikes – enjoying everything that is to be done. In other words, ‘going with the flow’.

How do I stay in the present moment? By being internally connected 24/7 in the heart. I like to live in the present. It gives me tremendous joy.

If people around me were able to be present, it would be wonderful! Each of us would be connected to One, and hence all of us would be at peace with ourselves. All

of us would start looking and treating each other in a totally different way – no prejudice, no judgment, no expectation, so no acceptance would be required. There would just be love, and the environment would become more conducive for our growth and also for others who come in contact with us.

BINDU MANI

Retired Bank Manager
& NGO Volunteer
Hyderabad, India



Living in the present is the awareness of living in a state of Grace. There are moments of peace and beauty, but accepting suffering as a gift is also an essential part of living in the present. Living in the present requires a clear conscience. As impressions are cleaned over the years, the conditioned conscience from past religious, parental and social upbringing is replaced by divine conscience, so discrimination becomes more and more important.

I don't think about staying in the present moment. I just do it. A daily meditation practice is essential. I like to swim, because all thoughts are lost in the sensations and movement. I like to walk, because there are always new points of beauty to notice. I like to cook, because the vegetables have nice colors and aromas and it makes me grateful. I even like to sweep my floor. I like to work at my job, because I get immersed in the reading and writing.

One thing in the back of my mind is the story about Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur drawing a single line on his hand and pointing out that if there is no other line the way is clear and focused. There is only single focus. If

all were to live in an attitude of submission, the world would be perfect. There would be no war, no disease and no famine. There would only be love.

CONNIE GROGAN

Medical Writer
Starnberg, Germany



Being present means not to be taken away from the moment by anything; to be fully involved in that moment. I think when we have total acceptance of what was, what is and what will be, then we can be totally in the present moment. Being in the present makes me feel more connected with everyone around me. I am also able to see people and situations from a new perspective.

I get inspired by children when I see them embrace every moment as it comes. It is natural for them. They are not bothered by the past, nor are they worried about the future. Unfortunately the same is not the case for grown-ups. But something that has helped me tremendously over the years is the simple practice of Heartfulness meditation. It allows the mind to remain settled and focused in the present moment. It has enlivened my existence.

I think we do justice to none but our own selves by being in the present. Else we deny ourselves the chance to learn and grow from what life has to offer us every moment. By being in the present we would complain less and appreciate more.

JESAL MEHTA

Proprietor
Kolkata, India



Perched on the cliffs, looking out over the ocean, breathing, nestled in my heart, feeling a peace within me and a flow of gratitude moving through me. I am present and Nature is present for me.

Driving my car, resting some attention in my heart, aware that I am alive and this life force is me and moves through me, I reach for my husband's hand, he takes it. I feel an expansion, an openness ... I am present and so is he.

Mingling through the family holiday gathering, aware of an uncomfortable feeling of disconnect, an emptiness, a sadness in my chest. I breathe, rest my attention on my breathing, and feel it. I nestle again in this peaceful place, allowing the calm, loving energy of my Nature to nourish me. Amidst the party, I stand there, quietly, slowly filling some of this sad space within me, with love. I am present. My daughter joins me, we share a piece of cake, we laugh ... Rebecca is present with me.

Arriving home, some sadness remains, I sit in a quiet place

to write this. My son, my college sophomore comes in, he sprawls his 6'3" frame awkwardly across my lap, gives me a hug, and says, "Thanks for everything mom." Again, what happens when those around me are present.

JOAN EVEN

Adjunct Professor of
Meditation Theory
and Practice
Massachusetts, USA



Sometimes I feel that strangers are people I already know. I do not experience them as separate, as 'other'. There are times when I get this feeling during the day at work or at weekends when I am out and about. It is quite delicious to feel connected to others. I experience a softness or tenderness in how I perceive them when I am present like this. This feeling of being present is a quality of connectedness to self and others that is quite precious.

The image of a mountaineer recalibrating the direction of travel comes to mind. Doing

my Heartfulness practice each morning is the best way I have found to help me to connect back with that heart space that is there, and it is especially useful when I notice I am being pulled out of my center and away from my heart. When I'm driving I mentally say, "Everything surrounding me is deeply absorbed in godly remembrance." At work I say, "All are developing correct thinking, right understanding and an honest approach to life." These suggestions help me connect via my heart with my surroundings, and I notice that I readjust in a very subtle manner as I relax into the feeling they evoke within. Physically I reconnect with my breath and slow down. Mentally the second suggestion seems to diffuse my edginess and helps dissolve my need to be 'right' in meetings. I can let things go more easily.

Being more in tune within myself seems to have an effect on others too. At work if I am centered and present, I tend to be softer and less rigid. In these moments I notice

that it's easier for all of us to behave in a more genial way with each other. Of course there are days when others are more present, and this has a really positive effect on me. I believe we are social beings to the core. We are deeply affected by each other more than we realize. The inner state of each one of us helps create our experience of the present moment together over and over each day. The more we can be present, the more harmony we can co-create together each day.

DR HESTER O'CONNOR
Clinical Psychologist
Ireland



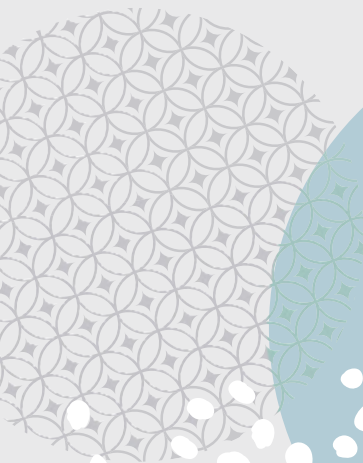


HOW

TO BE

present

18



DR ICHAK ADIZES takes us into his experience of feeling to be present, and the way it has changed his life.

It has been a common message in New Age thinking: be present, stop only thinking about the past or the future. Be present.

This made sense to me in light of my own experiences. While I was developing my methodology and testing them with my clients around the world, my mind was 100% occupied thinking about the future (thinking of ways to improve the methodology for the clients) or the past (diagnosing what went wrong and why).

My sons used to complain to me that I was not with them. I used to get upset. How can that be? I had flown from all over the world to be with them. But they were right. My body was there but not my presence, my mind, my spirit.

When my children start reminiscing about something that happened between us and ask me if I remember it, I go blank. It is not that I am struggling with Alzheimer's disease. It is that I was not there. My mind was with a client or

with a theory problem I was struggling with. I was where my mind was and my mind was not there.

Not being present has repercussions. Without the present, there is only the past and the future. Because the past does not exist anymore and the future has not happened yet, when you are not living in the present, you are not actually living. Instead, your life is what you imagine has happened or will happen, but your life is not happening.

When you are not present, your life flies by very fast. When the Christmas carols start playing in piped-in music, I stop and wonder, "Hey, hey, how did a year already pass? Where was I this year?" It is all blurred because I was not there. My mind was everywhere else.

So yes, we need to be present more to enjoy life because living in the past or in the future is living in your head and not really experiencing life.

But how can one be present?
I struggled with it.

People told me to meditate. That is how you become present.

I tried probably half a dozen meditations: sitting meditations, walking meditations, you name it. Meditating stopped my brain from terrorizing me, but it did not make me present.

Recently I think I found the answer: feel.

If you want to be present, stop thinking and just feel. Feel what is going on. Ask yourself, "How do I feel? How does whatever is happening at this moment make me feel?"



If you want to be present, stop thinking and just feel. Feel what is going on. Ask yourself, “How do I feel? How does whatever is happening at this moment make me feel?”

The more you feel, the more present you are. Feel what is happening here and now.

I tried to practice it. Close to my home in Carpinteria are the Carpinteria Bluffs. The bluffs are a piece of land along the coast that the local community bought and donated to the city, to be kept in perpetuity natural and free of development.

So, I go there for a walk. In the past, my brain would be working overtime. I would think about work, about books, family issues, you name it. For me, if I did not think I did not exist. My mind must be active all waking hours (and probably while dreaming, too).

But thinking, as I’ve said, takes me away from the present and into the past or future. So, I tried out my new insight. Feel. Stop thinking and feel where you are.

I stopped and looked at a tree. I tried to feel how the tree felt and how I felt about it. And it was very interesting. It was as if the tree spoke to me. Each branch had something to say: that they are struggling to get to the sunshine, how they depend on the roots to feed them, how the birds find respite among their leaves.

Then I looked at the clouds. How does it feel to be a cloud?

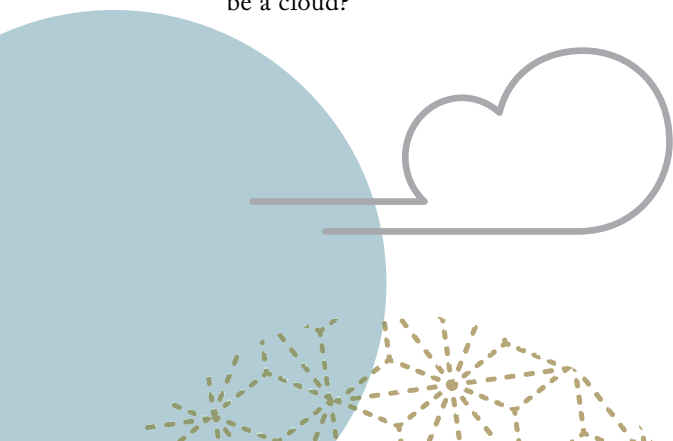
I stopped and looked at a tree. I tried to feel how the tree felt and how I felt about it. And it was very interesting. It was as if the tree spoke to me. Each branch had something to say: that they are struggling to get to the sunshine, how they depend on the roots to feed them, how the birds find respite among their leaves.

And for a moment I identified with the cloud. How wonderful it is to be floating effortlessly far away from details and obstructions on earth, carrying the wetness that will turn into rain and feed the earth with life-giving water.

I looked at the ants rushing in a line to get somewhere.

By directing myself to feel what I see rather than to think about what it is I see, I became present. I was not in the future nor in the past, I was there and then. In the present.

The more I feel and the less I think, the longer I live.



A photograph of a man and a young child lighting sparklers. The man is in the foreground, holding a lit sparkler. The child is in the background, also holding a lit sparkler. The scene is outdoors and festive.

Presence & Authenticity WITH Children

21

ELIANE SAINTE-MARIE is the founder of Parenting For Wholeness, creator of the acclaimed Clean Parenting program, author of *Clean Parenting - The Peaceful Parent's Essential Handbook*, and mother to three wonderful adult daughters. Here she shares her gift of helping parents take peaceful parenting from theory to day-to-day reality.



In my own family, as well as many families I work with, I find presence and authenticity in parenting to be the key to accessing a quality of relationship with our children, and a quality of flow and aliveness in our lives with them, which most parents don't even realize is possible.

I am a parenting coach, and most moms come to me thinking they need to build new skills in order to be effective parents. But though I teach some skills, the bulk of the work is designed to help them become present.

Present to their children: to their children's inner experience, essence and uniqueness. To truly see their children through every interaction with them.

My wish for all parents, my intention when I work with them, is that they can access their own guidance. Because once they do, they can find the exact words, approach and solutions for the unique needs of each situation they encounter.

Present to themselves: to their values, so they have clarity in their priorities and focus. To their feelings, their needs and their own experience, so they have access to their own guidance. To their conditioning, so they can become aware of obstacles and hopefully be free of them.

Present to what's happening in the moment, instead of being in their heads, caught up in some narrative that does not support them to deal with the situation effectively.

Some parents come to me seeking specific parenting techniques and solutions to parenting problems, but I don't provide them. In part, because I don't believe it's what best serves parents in the long run, but mostly because no one else can know what's right for them, for their children, for their family.

When trying to make a decision, our mind can only consider a limited number of factors at a time. But our inner guidance is usually taking all the relevant factors into account, like:

- Our values
- Our child's unique personality
- What he's been through and what he's going through right now, which might influence his behavior
- Our life as a whole, including our schedule, other people etc.
- Our intuitive sense of what might be going on and what might happen given specific responses
- Factors that aren't directly related but still have an impact on the situation

So I can't tell parents the right way for them to respond to an issue in their family. What I can do, however, is help them find their own answers. And help them figure out their approach to finding their own answers, so they quickly stop needing any external support.

My wish for all parents, my intention when I work with them, is that they can access their own guidance. Because once they do, they can find the exact words, approach and solutions for the unique needs of each situation they encounter. And this doesn't happen through studying and memorizing sentences, techniques or tools, but by being fully present and aware, attuned to the moment and whatever is called for in each unique moment.

I do teach some basic principles to parents, such as developing realistic expectations, learning to trust children, being on the same team, addressing the underlying cause of their behaviors, and providing support. And many parents do need help learning to be clear benevolent leaders for their children, in order to provide their children the guidance and sense of security they need.

But the bulk of my work is to support them to access their guidance and to parent in alignment with their values. I support them to create new pathways until they become the new default, and to clear the conditioning that keeps them stuck in reactivity and old patterns of reactions. Then they become confident and capable of easily handling what comes their way, so they're able to stay present.

AUTHENTICITY

One thing that can help us be present with our children is to be authentic. So many parents are looking to me for the right way of expressing themselves, specific words and tactics, when the most effective approach is to be authentic.

Children respond to authenticity, like us, because it is alive. It is what is unarguably true. You can hear and feel authenticity. It creates goodwill. It inspires. It connects. It taps into children's innate desire to please. It awakens what is alive in them.

Being authentic with children is generally much more effective than any other approach because we connect with them when we're authentic. We truly engage with them, in relationship with them, which is much more likely to activate their innate desire to please us.

Children can handle our range of feelings, as long as we take responsibility for them rather than blaming others. It's actually important they see how we handle negative feelings. Otherwise, how will they learn how to behave when they have strong feelings?

I provide this analogy to parents:

Think of a situation in which someone is trying to convince you to do something. How does it feel? How do you react?

Now think of a situation in which someone would like you to do something for them, and they honestly and authentically express their reason for it. How does that feel? How do you respond to that?

When we're authentic, we take responsibility for our feelings. It can be challenging at times because it forces us to become aware of uncomfortable experiences, be honest about them, and be vulnerable.

Here is one practical application of this: instead of trying to come up with effective tactics to get our children to do what we want, simply describe the situation, authentically, as we would to another adult. For example, we might tell a child: "I'm feeling uncomfortable watching you use this sharp knife, because the last time you did you got distracted and almost cut yourself." Or, "It makes me feel so happy when I wake up to a neat house. Can we please find a way to pick up all the toys before we go to bed?" Or, "I'm really having a hard day today. Would you mind helping your sister out with her snack?"

One caveat to being authentic is to make sure that what's being shared with children is age appropriate and presented in a responsible way. And that it comes from groundedness and clarity, not reactivity. Children can handle our range of feelings, as long as we take responsibility for them rather than blaming others. It's actually important they see



how we handle negative feelings. Otherwise, how will they learn how to behave when they have strong feelings?

Also, naming what's actually going on, which they're probably picking up on and feel, helps them relax. Their world makes sense, instead of them living in the discord of being told everything's okay or seeing mom pretending to be happy when they clearly feel it's not the case. This is a form of gaslighting and pretty damaging to their sense of self and ability to function well in the world.

By being present and authentic with our children, we develop a rich, joyful, connected and harmonious life with them, and also grow in our own ability to be present and live in closer harmony with our values in every area of our lives. What serves us with our children serves us in every other area of our lives, and vice versa. What a beautiful win-win, organic joyful way to live!



THOUGHT in action

Feelings can't be ignored, no matter how
unjust or ungrateful they seem.

Anne Frank



the heartful NEGOTIATOR

PART 4

More About Feelings and Emotions in the Heart

28

In the previous 3 articles of the series, **RAVI VENKATESAN** set a framework for how prior disposition, ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings all play a huge part in negotiation. He also took a deeper look at what constitutes prior disposition as we walk into a negotiation, and explored greed versus contentment and peace versus restlessness as opposites that constitute feelings and emotions in the heart. In this article he'll explore additional emotions and feelings, and provide suggestions on how to manage these through real life scenarios.

Feelings and emotions in the heart always come in dualities. Broadly these can be categorized into 5 main sets of opposites.

THOUGHTS & IDEAS

Ego perception - Me vs We

Intellect - Logic and Reason

Mind - Ad hoc ideas and wandering

FEELINGS & EMOTIONS

Clarity vs Doubt

Fear vs Courage

Love vs Anger

Peace vs Restlessness

Greed vs Contentment

PRIOR DISPOSITION

Worries and Concerns

Desires

Likes and Dislike

Guilt

Love versus Hate

Love and hate are extreme ways to describe these opposing emotions. They can also take the forms of compassion, empathy, affection etc. on one side, and annoyance, anger, self-centeredness etc. on the other side.

To explore this, let's take a scenario where Rita is negotiating a raise with her boss Jim, who has direction from senior leadership not to give raises and reduce the staff by 10%.

RITA: Jim, I wasn't happy with last year's raise. It wasn't fair based on how I performed. I hope to get at least a 15% raise this year to make up for it.

JIM: I don't think you have any idea of what is going on around here. You definitely did a good job, but your aspirations are not even in the right ballpark. I am fighting to save your job against pressure to reduce staff.

RITA: That is totally unfair. I don't control the company's overall performance. I did my job really well and expect to be rewarded based on that. I don't think I can stay motivated to do my best in this situation.

JIM: I understand how you feel, but I have my constraints.

RITA: I think you are just biased. I am sure Gary got a pretty good raise. As a matter of fact, I know he got better than me last year also.

JIM: Look here, I am trying to do my best for you, but your attitude is not helping.

RITA: I really don't care anymore what you think of my attitude. I am leaving. I don't want to work here even one more day.



In this scenario Rita received news that she did not expect and found unpleasant. This put her into a downward spiral of anger, suspicion and eventually hate. She lost all objectivity, and not only did she not get the raise she wanted, but ended up losing her job before finding another one. This could have devastating consequences for her family, but her judgment was clouded by emotion. For his part, Jim started out neutral, but let Rita's negativity impact him, and made things worse by calling out her poor attitude just as she was ready to explode.

Here are some suggestions to manage love, compassion and empathy versus hate, anger and self-centeredness:

- Take a few deep breaths and calm yourself before getting into a negotiation, especially when you know that the conversation is going to be difficult. This puts you in a neutral state, and makes you alert to your own emotional state.
- If the conversation starts to become emotional and negative, immediately put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try to feel what they feel. Articulate the issue or problem from their perspective and ask them to look at it from yours. For example, Jim could have said, "From your perspective, I totally get the expectation of a raise, especially based on what you got last year. However, I want to share with you the company's situation, and have you look at this from my perspective."
- Approach the conversation with the affection that you would have when dealing with a family member. For example, Rita could have said, "Jim, I appreciate your effort in saving my job. I know that you would have looked out for me. I still feel strongly that my compensation does not reflect my performance. Is there a way to do a one-time bonus to make up for a raise?" This approach puts Jim in a much more positive mode to think creatively about other options. Negotiating as partners trying to find the best outcome is way better than as adversaries trying to win while making the other lose.

30

Fear versus Courage

Fear comes in many shapes and forms. It can start as anxiety and end up as paranoia. Courage, while very useful, can also be dangerous when extreme. Fearlessness can lead people to make bad choices. The key is to find the right balance.

Consider a scenario where Bob is a coach and Jason is the owner of a basketball team. They are discussing the replacement of their shooting guard and star player, Rodriguez.

BOB: The losses we've had recently are because of a single reason. Rodriguez is a great individual player, but terrible with the team. We have to replace him to get the team to a better place.

JASON: That's crazy. He was the only scorer in the last two games and has been our top performer for the last two seasons. Sounds like too big a risk.

BOB: We have to try something new. We can always bench him and bring him back if this doesn't work.

JASON: I don't like that at all. He might get demotivated if we do that.

BOB: How can I be effective at my job, if I can't make these types of decisions?

JASON: This just sounds way too risky, let's wait for a few more games and revisit.



This is a classic case where fear will cause decisions to be deferred. Whether it is in government or business or sports, way more damage happens because of not making decisions than because of making bad decisions. This is squarely due to fear. Let's consider some recommendations to manage this, specifically from a negotiating perspective:

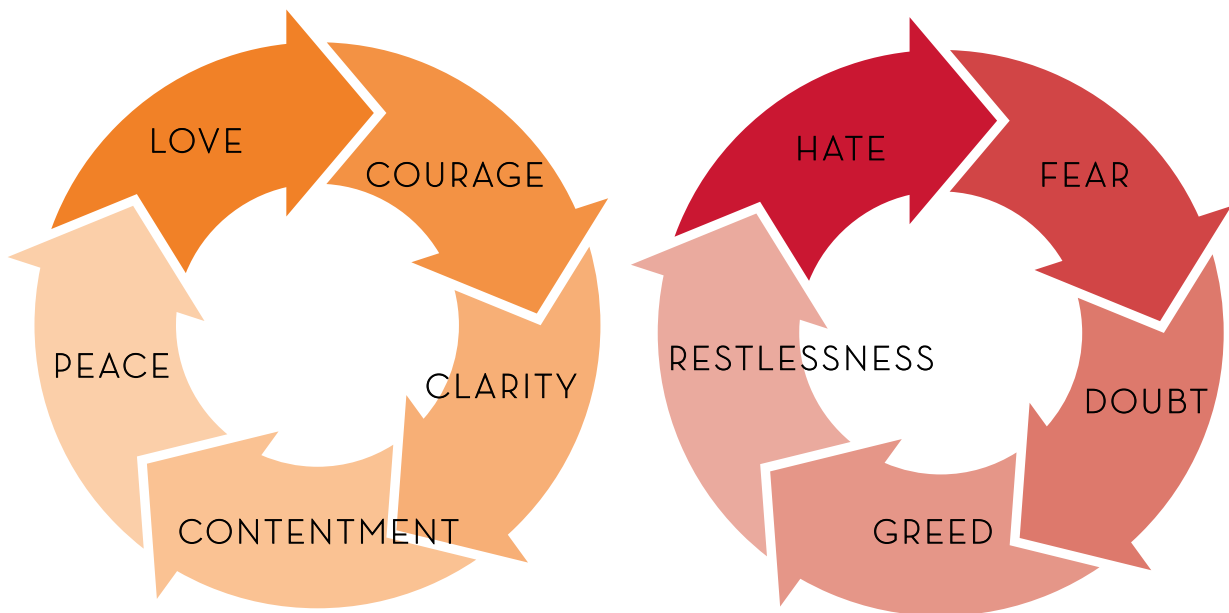
- Before entering a negotiation, create a short list of what you are afraid of with respect to this conversation. Think rationally about whether these fears are well-founded or driven by anxiety.
- As you get into a negotiation, if you feel very uncomfortable and anxious ask for time to consider the information and come back. Fear can impact you physically and it is difficult to recover to a neutral state without taking some time.
- To address fear in a person with whom you are negotiating, use reassuring language and gently present facts and data points. For example, instead of suggesting benching Rodriguez, which Jason perceived as too risky, Bob could have said, "I see your point about risk. One option is to bench Rodriguez for a couple of games, and another is to have him play a different position, explaining it to him as us trying different game strategies. Do you think either of these would work for us to try someone else?"
- Be mentally alert to either extreme fear or fearlessness in both yourself and others with whom you are negotiating. The key is to stay in a balanced zone.

Clarity versus Doubt

The fifth opposite pair of feelings and emotions is clarity versus doubt. This is mostly a consequence of the other four opposites that we discussed.

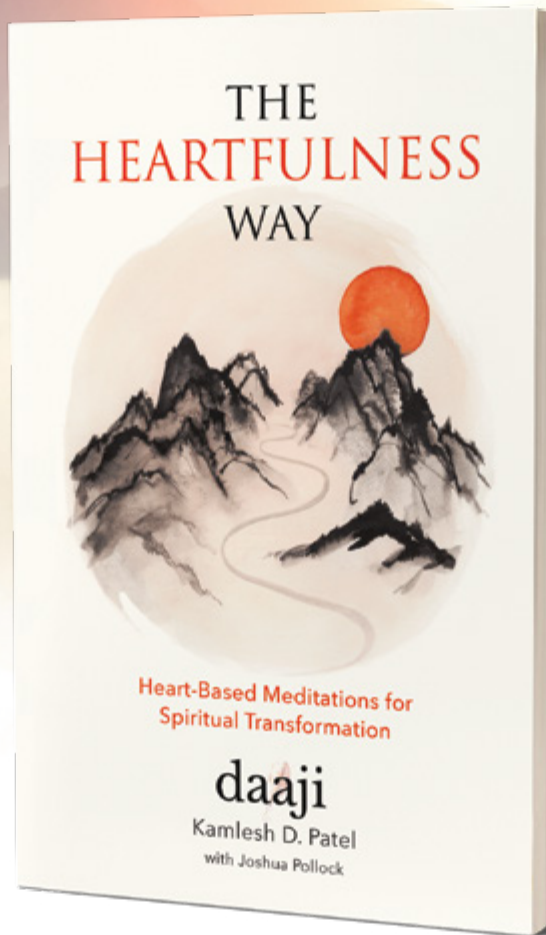
The 4 opposites we have explored – greed versus contentment, peace versus restlessness, love versus hate, and fear versus courage, form primary feelings and emotions. They are also interrelated. For example, discontent will usually lead to restlessness, which in turn will lead to anger and hate, which will lead to anxiety and fear, which will eventually lead to loss of clarity. On the other hand, contentment will lead to peace, which will lead to love and compassion, which will lead to courage, which will lead to clarity. So, in a sense, these opposites also represent a virtuous and a vicious cycle.

32



In subsequent articles we'll look at the thoughts and ideas in our heads, and how to manage these in order to be effective negotiators.

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how to stay **BALANCED** AT **WORK**



34

DR NATWAR SHARMA is a member of the Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health (MRCPCH), and has served and trained in the pediatric intensive care unit of Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, India. During the course of his work as a pediatric intensivist and a therapist of alternate healing, he faces the usual difficulties of coping with stress at work and the challenge of staying emotionally detached from his patients.

Here he is interviewed by DR VIJI BALASUBRAMANIAN about how he finds balance and rejuvenation amidst a hectic schedule.

Q As a therapist, how do you nurture and nourish yourself so that the work with your patients does not affect you in a negative way and at the same time actually helps them to heal?

There are three things my guide told me: first, to maintain absolute confidentiality when dealing with a patient or client, because unless I give that space to them they cannot open up to me. Second, not to judge anybody, because the moment I judge I'm finished. That judgment will not only destroy my ability to help but it will also affect my client energetically. I may not tell that person, but energetically it definitely has an effect. I have noticed that.

There is a wonderful quote from *Autobiography of a Yogi*: "The vanished lives of all men are dark with many shames." There are no exceptions. So who am I to judge? Just because we are traveling in a boat, the fact that you are sitting in the front and somebody is behind does not mean that person is inferior. You are still in the boat. If you are born on this Earth as a human being, that means you are born with baggage. Your baggage may be smaller; his baggage may be bigger; her baggage may be darker; yours may be lighter. But baggage is baggage. For example, whether it is a golden prison or a steel prison, it is still a prison. So who am I to judge?

The third thing is not to resonate, because if I start resonating with somebody else's problem I cannot finish my work. I must let go of it otherwise I can't deal with a person of that nature. So these three things are quite important.

Q And how do you cultivate these?

You need to be grounded. If you don't ground yourself, it is very easy to be swayed. I ground myself through meditation. Can we avoid stress in this world today? Impossible. Because the world is so fast, the world has no time. Imagine 20 years ago when we had no phone, we had so much time. We could sit, talk and gossip. We could go out and look at the stars. Who does it today? Very rarely. Even villagers have become busy with WhatsApp, smartphones etc. They don't look at nature either. They are losing their ability to predict the hour and whether it is going to rain or not. It's gone.

So now when you are living in such a world where you cannot avoid stress, what do you do? You have to combat it. How do you combat it? Just by taking a pill? If you take a pill, you will have to take it every day because stress is an everyday affair. And what is that pill? Meditation is my pill. If I don't meditate one day I accumulate stress, and it piles up. So ten years down the line if you have hypertension or diabetes, it is because you've piled up so much stress. Now you may ask, "Can I get better if I start meditating?" Of course you can get better, but it will take time because you have abused your body for a long time. At least give it that much time to recover.

So meditation has to be a daily affair. We sleep every day, we feel stressed every day, so why not meditate every day? That is the pill. We take multivitamin tablets when we have some deficiency. Meditation is a multi-body tablet; it is not just for your physical body, but for your subtler bodies also.

And a wonderful thing that we have in Heartfulness is cleaning. Whatever work you do, you will accumulate a lot of unnecessary things while working and interacting with people; anywhere

you go you get affected. When you sink into that, of course there will be an effect. So the best thing is to let go of it through the cleaning process every evening, otherwise in the long run surely you're going to get affected.

Q Can you share your experience of this cleaning process? How has it helped you?

If I don't do my cleaning for 3 to 4 days at a stretch I realize I get bogged down. My mind is not clear, thoughts keep bugging me, and I feel heavy from inside. Once I do it, I sleep peacefully. I sleep nicely and deeply, and the next morning my meditation charges me, like recharging the battery to get me through the whole day. When you meditate for a long time you develop sensitivity, and this sensitivity tells you that today you are feeling like this because you have not done this. Like when you don't bathe you start stinking. Similarly inside, your heart tells you it's not right today.

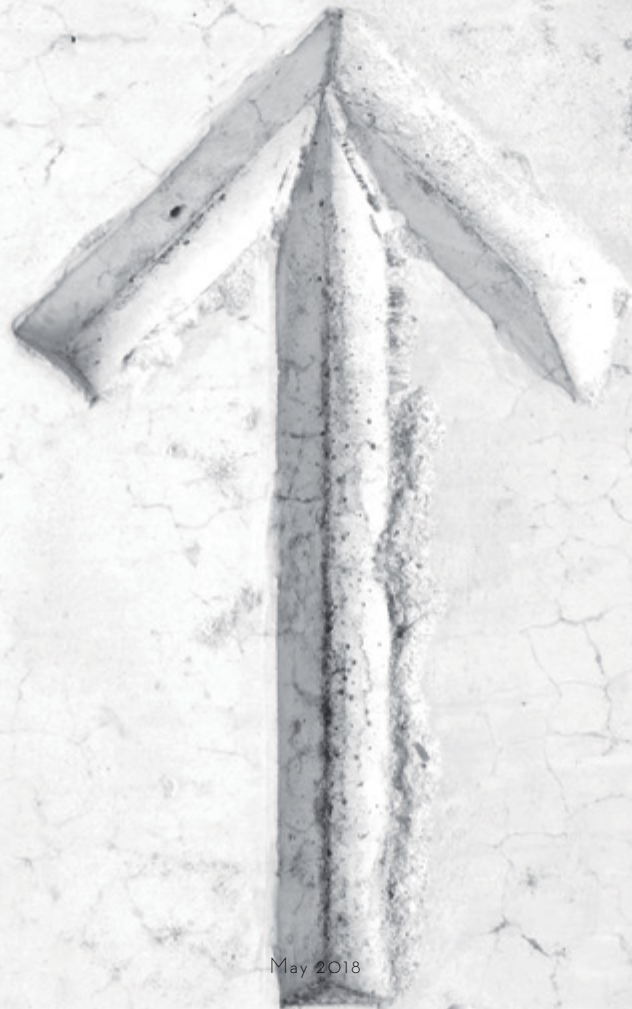
Q But how does it help you in your profession?

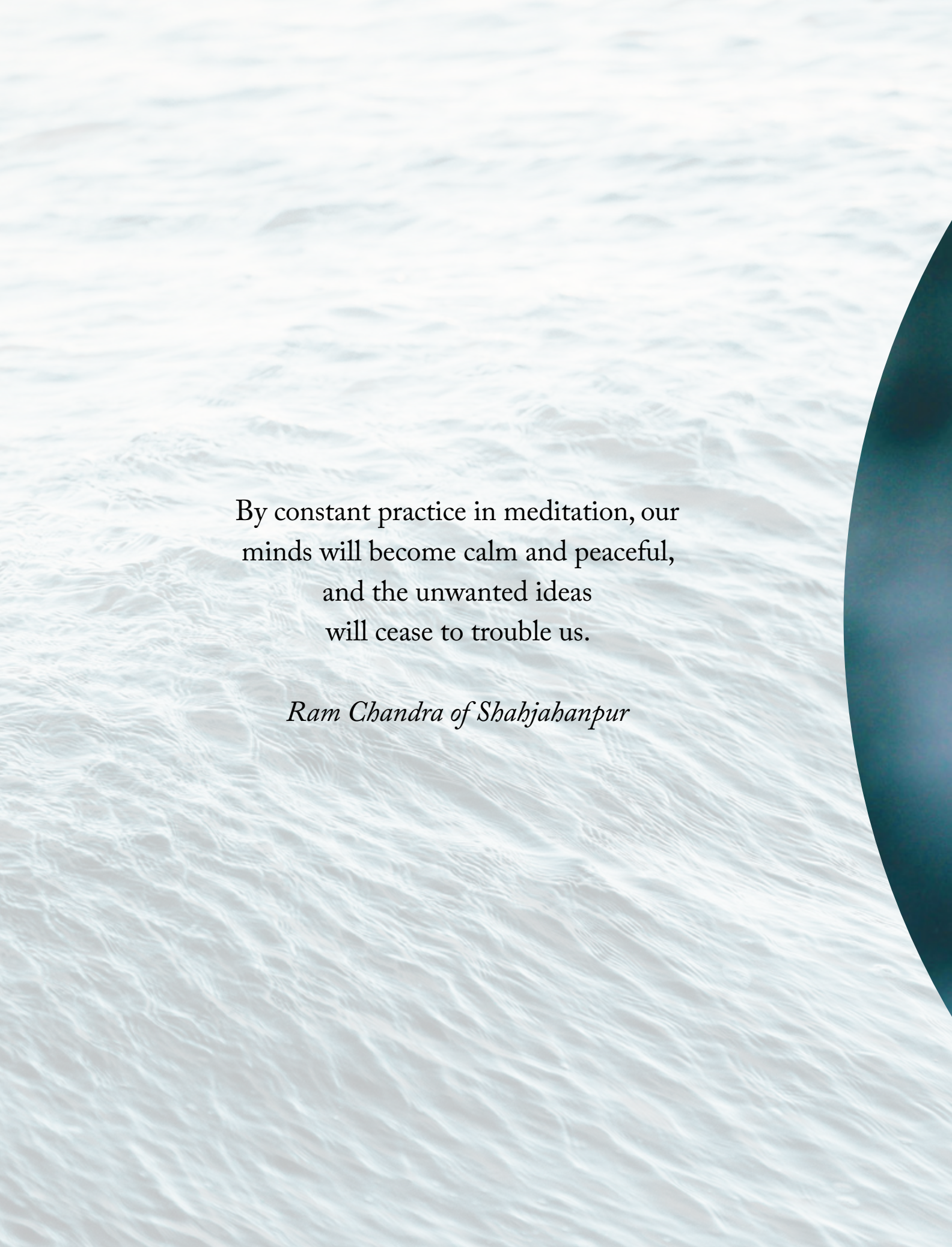
Oh, it helps me big time! Meditation is something that creates balance inside. It makes you a balanced person. So whatever field you are in, balance is there. Basically, it is a way to equip yourself to face

You need to be grounded. If you don't ground yourself, it is very easy to be swayed.

the world. When you are getting into an arena you need to be equipped with the right tools and skills to face anything. Like that, meditation makes you stronger mentally to deal with situations. For example, I deal with very sick kids in the ICU in hospitals. If I start feeling sad, if I start panicking and thinking, "What's going to happen? What is this? I am responsible ..." then what happens? I get sucked into negativity. In that situation I need to keep my mind clear. I need to keep my mind sharp to help kids to get better.

There is a saying, "We treat, He cures." So with that wisdom my job is now nothing but to treat this child with whatever abilities I have, and let Him decide. There are situations with kids who are very sick, and you think they are going to pass on but they survive and come out. Other times you feel, "Oh, there is nothing wrong with this person," when he walks into the ICU, and two days later he is dead. So that teaches you the wisdom that you just do your duty, do your karma in sync with whatever best you can do. Meditation gives that balance, that mental stability to focus on what you do.





By constant practice in meditation, our
minds will become calm and peaceful,
and the unwanted ideas
will cease to trouble us.

Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur



Interview

Mindfulness HEARTFULNESS

VASCO GASPAR speaks with EMMA IVATURI about meditation, thoughts and experiencing the inner world.

Q Please tell us a little bit about yourself and the kind of work you do with mindfulness?

40

I like to think that I work as a Human Flourishing Facilitator, investing my energy in trying to inspire change and transformation globally for a more human and compassionate world. For that I've been sharing information online, writing books, giving talks and facilitating programs online and face-to-face, mainly within the corporate setting, but also for the public in general.

Mindfulness is just one of the 'awareness-based social technologies' that I've been sharing in the last years, mainly in Europe and South America, but a powerful one to open the field of



consciousness. One of the most requested protocols I deliver is Search Inside Yourself – a Mindfulness-based Emotional Intelligence program that was created at Google in 2007. It gathers Mindfulness and neuroscience in a secular way to create wiser and more compassionate leaders.

I also developed my own Mindfulness protocol in 2013, an 8-week program called ZBHD, that has already been done by more than 3,000 people worldwide.

Studies show that even a few minutes of daily practice can lead to significant changes in measures like stress, social trust, mental well-being and attention.

I'm now dedicated to merging different practices, like Mindfulness, Heartfulness and Presencing, into the same protocol at the service of the greater good: human flourishing.

Q You've taught Mindfulness in corporate settings and organizations for many years. What surprises people when they start an introspective practice for the first time?

There are several reactions actually. Some people feel





Heartfulness goes into deeper places of our journey and potential as humans. And then there is the quality of Yogic Transmission in Heartfulness, which raises the experience to a completely different level.

restless and scared in the beginning when they notice how much mental noise they have inside themselves: ruminations about the past, storytelling about the future and so on. Others feel surprised or even sad when they realize that they spend most of their waking hours almost completely in autopilot, just going with the flow of their conditioning, both internal and external. But most of them feel amazed when they get in contact with parts of them that are healthy, sane, wise and compassionate. That brings to most people a sense of peace that they have almost

forgotten it was possible to feel. In one workshop, a gentleman shared after the first very short three-minute practice: “I’m 55, and I haven’t felt so peaceful since the moment I started working 25 years ago.” That is something that brings me hope.

Q So it’s never too late to start a meditation practice! What are some tips you have for people who want to establish a regular practice?

I think one of the best things people can do at the beginning



is to start with baby steps. Instead of trying to meditate for one hour right at the beginning, maybe they can start by doing it for five to ten minutes a day and then gradually build upon that. One teacher I had even used to say that one minute is infinitely greater than zero minutes. So start small.

Another thing is to do it regularly, daily if possible, in order to create a habit. Most of us don't need to think about the act of brushing our teeth or taking a shower. Why? Because it has become

a habit. We can do the same with meditation.

Q What do you remember from your first weeks of the Mindfulness practice? Is there anything that you would have applied differently knowing what you know now?

My memory is not my main strength, but what comes to mind is a feeling of frustration mainly of sensing that I was not doing it right, that my mind wouldn't stop and even

one minute seemed to me like an hour of agony. If it were now, I would know that that is totally normal, that the goal of meditation is not to stop the mind. The mind thinks as the heart beats and the stomach digests, and the more effort we apply in that direction the more restless the mind becomes. So, as the Mindfulness teacher Joseph Goldstein often says, I would try to "be simple and easy."


Q How can we bring simplicity and ease to our

lives in an increasingly complex world? Sometimes it feels like we have to stay plugged in just to feel productive or knowledgeable. Where's the balance?

That is a wonderful question. Here is where I think remembering to be present is so important. Moment by moment. Each breath. Each action. Coming back to our selves, to our senses. And if it is becoming increasingly more difficult to do it with so many distractions around us, that is where we need to use our will and our intention.

Our intention can work like an anchor. If my intention is to have a healthy body, I will go to the gym even on the days I don't feel like going. Or I will choose to eat broccoli instead of fried potatoes. The same applies to our mind. If I have a strong intention to have a healthy mind, and to be present, I will make choices in that direction, using my will to meditate daily, to pause during the day, to notice regularly where my mind is at each moment, and to bring it back to my body if it is not there, in order to find balance.

I think remembering to be present is so important. Moment by moment. Each breath. Each action. Coming back to our selves, to our senses. And if it is becoming increasingly more difficult to do it with so many distractions around us, that is where we need to use our will and our intention.

 Some people worry that getting too involved in meditation will make them feel detached from the world around them. Has your journey enriched your life?

I understand that concern, but I see it the opposite way. I believe that the more you are connected to your self and your inner world, the more you're able to connect with the outer world in a clear and authentic way. Even in terms of empathy, for instance, there are several scientific studies suggesting that the more you are aware of your bodily sensations (some practices develop such sensations), the more empathy you can feel towards others. Why? Because

the mind uses the body to understand the worlds of other people, by mimicking in our own bodies the emotions we see in others. People who put Botox on their faces, for instance, have more difficulty in identifying emotions in others.

On the other hand, the concern is valid, because when you get in contact with your Self you'll understand better what life wants to live through you. Then maybe you'll realize that you've been searching for happiness in the wrong places: in status, money, drugs, alcohol, consumerism, sex, and so on. That realization will probably stir you towards your Real life. You will leave behind what is superfluous and doesn't nurture you deeply. And that will allow you to step into a

world that is more aligned, conscious and authentic for you and what you value.

Q What is one of the most powerful tools we can use to expand our awareness of the present moment?

I sincerely believe that some types of meditation allow us to be more aware of the present moment; that being the main focus of the Mindfulness practices. And not only of what's happening inside us – our feelings, thoughts and emotions – but also what's happening around us. We can train our awareness to be more expansive, to be more relaxed and open to what's emerging at each moment. That will allow us to be more conscious and, therefore, to make better decisions, moment by moment. That will lead us to better results in life.

Q You recently conducted an eight-week Mindfulness course for a number of Heartfulness trainers from around the world, and I had the pleasure of participating in it. Can you share a little about your

experience of guiding seasoned meditators?

I feel deeply humbled to have had that opportunity. At the beginning I was a bit scared, I must confess. There I was, delivering a Mindfulness program that was designed for beginners, who don't have any contact with meditation at all, to a group of very skilled Heartfulness teachers, some of them with several decades of practice. But I think it went very well. The program had several sessions of dialogue, and it was beautiful to learn about the bridges people were making between the practices, sharing what they were feeling, and so on. I've learned so much from the experience and by being in contact with so many wonderful people. I feel very grateful.

Q What are the bridges between the mindful and heartfelt approaches?

I believe that there are several bridges. They are different paths, if we go to the core of the practices, but both are true and valid. Maybe Mindfulness focuses more on grosser sensations, like

body sensations, emotions and thoughts, whereas Heartfulness goes into deeper places of our journey and potential as humans. And then there is the quality of Yogic Transmission in Heartfulness, which raises the experience to a completely different level. But that needs to be experienced, and I invite all the readers to try it and realize it for themselves. At the same time, maybe Mindfulness can help Heartfulness practitioners to be more conscious and aware of their heartfelt journeys, to be more awake to what's really happening when they enter into deeper realms of consciousness. I think we can learn from both approaches and have a more integral understanding of who we are in our journeys.

Q Is there anything else you want to share?

Just a feeling of gratitude for the wonderful and inspiring magazine you've been sharing with us in these last years. Thank you!

IT CHANGES
everything





People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other.

Martin Luther King Jr

A Different Way to Play

Part 2

DEBRA LYNN DADD and SARAH BALDWIN continue their conversation on non-toxic toys, including storybooks, seasonal toys, play silk, and other organic materials for art and craft that are available on Sarah's website, www.bellalunatoys.com

48

Q I remember some years ago when I first started discovering these toys, my husband and I bought different toys just because we wanted to have the shapes of different things. At that time he was trading futures for pork bellies, and I bought him a little pig. He just loved it because he loves anything that's wood. Even though he's not a child, he still appreciates the smell and touch and feel of wood.

I was looking at your website, and there are so many different and interesting things. I'd like us to talk about some of these different toys, how children play with them, and how they give children a different view of the world. The page I'm on right now is about children's books,

and I see that they revolve around the seasons. The book talks about children engaged in springtime activities, like playing with new-born lambs, planting a garden, decorating Easter eggs, watching baby birds, and things like that.

Yes, the series you're looking at is a set of four board books for toddlers. Just as I was talking before about the simplicity of toys, there is simplicity in these books too. They have no words, just as Waldorf dolls have no faces. A child and parent can look together at these pictures of children doing



seasonal things, like dyeing Easter eggs in spring, and walking through a mud puddle or jumping in leaves in the autumn book. So this will help children with their own language. As a toddler is developing his or her vocabulary they can make up the words; they can make up their own stories as they go through these books.

Q And the stories could be different every time they are told, whether the parent is telling the story or the child is telling the story.

Exactly.


Q Again it's use of imagination; they can see different things in the pictures. It's just another way I see of connecting the children and parents, too, to the natural world as the basis of life, rather than having the industrial world as the basis of life. This takes you into that bigger world, whether it's a toy or book.

Exactly. Storytelling is such a big part of Waldorf Education throughout all the grades, starting in early childhood and going through eighth grade and even through high school. In the early years we tell stories by heart; we don't use a lot of picture books. In kindergarten we tell a lot of fairy tales, and the teacher repeats them over and over again. Sometimes we tell the same story every day for a week until it really becomes a part of the child, and those children then start telling the stories themselves and you hear it in their play. It's a very different thing to tell a story by heart than to read it from a book.

And for parents to make up stories with their children is the best gift of all. A lot of parents think, "Oh, I can't do that. I can't think of anything." Well, it's so easy once you start. Children love to hear stories about, "When I was a little girl," or "When daddy was a little boy and did this." A great thing to do at bedtime is to review the day with your child. You can make up a story about a little squirrel or a mouse that did all the same things your child did that day.






 I also want to mention that some of the other toy categories are art supplies, so that children learn drawing, writing, painting, modeling and crafts, to help them learn skills like knitting and sewing. Some of the other toys have to do with playing things, like cooking, and so there are a lot of skills that children learn while they are playing.

Yeah, exactly. Another thing that is unique about Waldorf Education is the emphasis on handwork. All children in the early years learn to work with their fingers. Kindergarten children learn what we call finger knitting, like making a crochet chain by hand with their fingers.

What all the recent research shows is how directly connected the finger tips are with the brain. And so by developing fine motor skills, children are actually developing their brains and increasing their capacity for learning. When children get to first grade in a Waldorf School, all the boys and girls learn to knit with knitting needles. They later learn to crochet and embroider, and by sixth grade they are sewing and learning to use the sewing machine. But these just aren't artistic activities, these are learning activities that really help in brain development as well as producing beautiful things with their hands: things they can give as gifts or use themselves.

 And it's a useful skill in life; people should know how to do things like sew a button on their shirt at least.

Exactly.

 So it's giving children basic life skills while they are playing, instead of sitting them down with a book and saying, "Now read this." It's that actual hands-on activity, and a lot of these toys are things like a stove or a cash register that is a toy for a real life skill.

Yes.

 And they can play going to the store and learn how to count money and things like that. That's just one of the things I love.

Exactly. You bring up a good point: young children love to imitate the world they see around them, and to imitate the work of adults. So as teachers we are very conscious that what we say needs to be worthy of imitation. What are our actions? What are the children seeing us do and how are we doing them? Are we hurried and stressed as we do our daily work, or can we remain calm and relaxed as we are preparing meals or cleaning and doing mundane tasks? Are we doing them consciously and with intention, knowing that the children around us will be imitating not just our actions but our mood as well?



Young children love to imitate the world they see around them, and to imitate the work of adults. So as teachers we are very conscious that what we say needs to be worthy of imitation.

Q Yes. So, tell us about play silks. What do children do with play silks?

They're just large squares of dyed silk in different colors, about one yard by one yard square, and they are played with in so many ways. Most Waldorf kindergarten classes will have a big basket of colored silk. The children use them as dress-ups, they will tie them on as a cape or a skirt or a veil, or they become wings, or tie it around their waist as a belt for a pirate sword, and they also use them as landscapes in their play. They'll take a green silk and it will become green grass for little wooden horses, and a blue silk will become a pond or a lake, and a brown silk draped over some blocks becomes a mountain. We talked earlier about materials that are nourishing to the senses, and silk just feels so lovely to the skin and really fulfills that need of toys that are nourishing to the senses.

Q Yes, silk does feel so different than polyester. Tell us about some of the seasonal toys.

I always try to have a collection of things for the season because, again, in Waldorf Education the seasons are very important, and we talk a lot about rhythm. Having a rhythm of the day, a rhythm of the week, a rhythm of the year. And the rhythm of the year is the season. A lot of it is how children in the early years are learning about the world and nature, which is kind of their science study. Celebrating festivals throughout the year, too, is really healthy for children. Just think back to your own childhood; holidays through the year

They're all celebrations to light into the darkest time of the year, with the short days and the long nights, and lighting candles. So all these different festivals from different traditions have to do with light this year. We have this lovely wooden spiral that holds 24 candles that you can either count off leading up to Christmas or whatever festival you celebrate.

not only give us a reference for the frame of the year but also bring reverence and meaning to the seasons and to whatever holidays and whatever culture we're from.

Children love ritual and celebration, and so at this time of the year we have some German wooden advent figures, a spiral where you can light candles whether you celebrate the Solstice or Advent or Christmas or Hanukkah. They're all celebrations to light into the darkest time of the year, with the short days and the long nights, and lighting candles. So all these different festivals from different traditions have to do with light this year. We have this lovely wooden spiral that

holds 24 candles that you can either count off leading up to Christmas or whatever festival you celebrate. At Easter we'll have lots of springtime grass planting kits and natural egg dyeing kits, and we'll have gardening things in the summer, and so on.

 Wonderful! And in addition to all these unusual things there also are the usual things, like wooden blocks, push/pull toys, puzzles and stuffed toys.

Well, Sarah, I so appreciate you being here as a guest. Is there anything else that you would like to say before we end?

I just want to thank you so much Debra for your interest. I'm glad you discovered Bella Luna Toys, and I really appreciate your enthusiasm and everything you are doing to promote green and healthy living.

 Thank you.

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| S I M P L Y |
elemental

ANNA PEARSE not only learns to deal with anger but also discovers the art of using it as a tool for self-development.

Integration has been an important word to me lately. How to use what we gain through meditation to affect the changes that are needed for us to become fully human? I would like to share what seems like a very elementary step in my evolution as a human being, but very real and radical to me nonetheless.

I had been experiencing a wonderful stillness in meditation and had been giving myself the time after meditation to really savor this feeling and integrate it into my body and mind, using writing as an aid in this process. I carried this stillness into my days. It was the darkest time of the year and the stillness within seemed to be in tune with the stillness of nature.

One evening, however, I was on the phone with a member of my family and I suddenly found myself in the grips of anger. It was triggered by a message she passed on to me from another member of my family. First of all disappointment rose to the surface, and then anger. It felt as though anger had taken possession of my body and mind and there was no room for anything else.

I started to express my anger on the phone and slowly realized that this wasn't the way to deal with it. I had to use it to move myself on without entangling anybody else in it.

What followed was 12 hours of fire raging through me. I recognized early on my habitual reactions: "I shouldn't be feeling like this after so many years of meditation ..." followed by lengthy self-justification. And still the fire raged.

At some stage in the process there was an understanding that this is fire, and then a linking of this to the Heartfulness teaching – only recently grasped – that the elements of earth, ether, fire, water and air are all contained within the Heart Region. As part of our inner journey in this life we need to experience them and work with them in order to master them and move on in our development. I remembered also that anger can be a pure emotion showing us what needs to change and that it can play a purifying role in our development when it is not be directed towards another person.

Somehow these simple tools allowed me to work through this patiently, giving it time. Feeling the elemental nature of the process was a wonderful thing. Fire! It was a natural force within that could be utilized! So I felt it, saw it and observed it, without judgment.

I recognized that in the past anger had triggered a circular process that led nowhere. "I shouldn't be feeling this way" unleashed all sorts of complexities



56

including self-justification, sorrows from the past, resentment. And then it would arrive back at, “But I shouldn’t be feeling this way. ...” I was also aware when the cold and distancing emotion of resentment tried to assert itself that it was healthier to stay in the heat of the fire.

Before sleep I tried to clean myself using the Heartfulness method, but it wasn’t finished yet. I fell asleep finally and woke after a few hours. It was still there so I continued to allow it to run its course, using writing as a tool to express

it and to help it keep moving on. A part of the anger was that I felt I had never been allowed to express myself fully. So writing was a good tool.

Slowly I realized that the fire was passing; it had run its course. And what was left? Love. Love for myself and for my sister – the two protagonists in this human drama. And love for those who have given me these tools to clean, soften and nourish the heart and then to apply the understanding with love to affect real and lasting change, which will enable me eventually to be all that I can be.

Somehow these simple tools allowed me to work through this patiently, giving it time. Feeling the elemental nature of the process was a wonderful thing. Fire! It was a natural force within that could be utilized! So I felt it, saw it and observed it, without judgment.

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Death is simply a shedding of the physical body like the butterfly shedding its cocoon. It is no different from taking off a suit of clothes one no longer needs. It is a transition to a higher state of consciousness where you continue to perceive, to understand, to laugh, and to be able to grow.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES AND REVELATIONS

THEOPHILE THE YOUNG continues his mentorship on the topic of death with his teacher, THEOPHILE THE ELDER. In this conversation, they together explore the idea of 'near death experiences' and the revelations that come with them.

60



Theophile the Elder: What have you learned from your readings about Near Death Experiences (NDEs)?

Theo the Young: I discovered many different aspects. Medically speaking, NDEs definitely aren't hallucinations, as the flat line on the ECG shows there is no more activity of the heart. But what I find interesting is that people can leave their bodies and be in two worlds at once, thus being able to give a faithful description of the surgery they underwent and the dialogue between the physicians and nurses during the operation. One of the patients even said to his surgeon that during his NDE he was able to read the inscription on the

metal plate underneath the operating table. The surgeon has no idea that there was a plate, but he checked and confirmed it was indeed there. This comforted the patient who could then conclude that the beautiful light he saw was also real and not simply a figment of his imagination.

Couldn't we have astral projections, out of body experiences, just for fun?

E: I used to do just that when I was young, but my spiritual guide advised me to stop.

Y: Why?

E: He said it could damage my nervous system. The astral body might be damaged, particularly if re-entering the body proves to be difficult. Later I understood that travelling to the Infinite should start inwardly, via the dimensions of the heart. The heart protects and integrates all the plans of the being.

Y: All the persons who have lived through an NDE enjoyed it. It gave a new meaning to their lives. They came back with a feeling of love and peace. Can you explain why they all shared that feeling?

E: It means that they have been in touch with the Point of the light of the soul, the Christ point of the love dimension (Point 2 in the Heart Region). At this point we feel so much love for others. We no longer fear death. We have an intense love and respect for life; any form of life becomes sacred. We develop empathy and compassion for all,

Like any major event in our lives, an NDE is our soul's choice. The soul determines its own destiny before incarnating. Chariji told me once that, before coming to Earth, every soul had chosen the moment and circumstances of its death. So, why should we worry about it?

which matches what we are aiming for in our spiritual approach.

Like any major event in our lives, an NDE is our soul's choice. The soul determines its own destiny before incarnating. Chariji told me once that, before coming to Earth, every soul had chosen the moment and circumstances of its death. So, why should we worry about it? Better to live our lives

intensely, fearing nothing and being in perfect harmony with our souls.

Y: Is that what free will means? And is it prenatal, then?

E: It remains postnatal too, as we have decisive choices to make throughout our existence.

Y: What choices?

E: Either we follow our soul and its destiny, or we loiter on the way. As I already told you, neither Love nor God can put us under any constraint. We are free to choose, but we do bear responsibility for the consequences.

Now, let us come back to our description: the experience and the revelations gained during an NDE usually make the persons feel peaceful, aspire to deeper knowledge and spirituality, and live their lives with intense joy. The precious teachings they have received have completely transformed their understanding of what being on Earth means. Now they have access to greater sensitivity and can at times aspire to the Divine through prayer, contemplation and meditation.

They have had a direct vision of the Divine. They can no longer be satisfied with this or that creed. They want to relive, to extend the spiritual experience they had of the ineffable light, of the music of the spheres, and of such extraordinary colors. It even happened that some of these people met spiritual entities and were taught by them. They sometimes came back with intuitive capacities and mediumistic gifts.

Either we follow our soul and its destiny, or we loiter on the way. As I already told you, neither Love nor God can put us under any constraint. We are free to choose, but we do bear responsibility for the consequences.

Y: How is that possible? Sometimes it happens during the few seconds that a heart attack or a stroke may last, doesn't it?

E: Time for them to pass through into another time dimension.

Y: And these few instants let them see their entire lives unfold, all details included, as if it were a film.

E: Exactly! Then, time and space don't exist anymore. The story of Arjuna and Lord Krishna before the Mahabharata War is a good example: a short moment before the battle was enough for Krishna to transmit the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. A single and unique moment ...

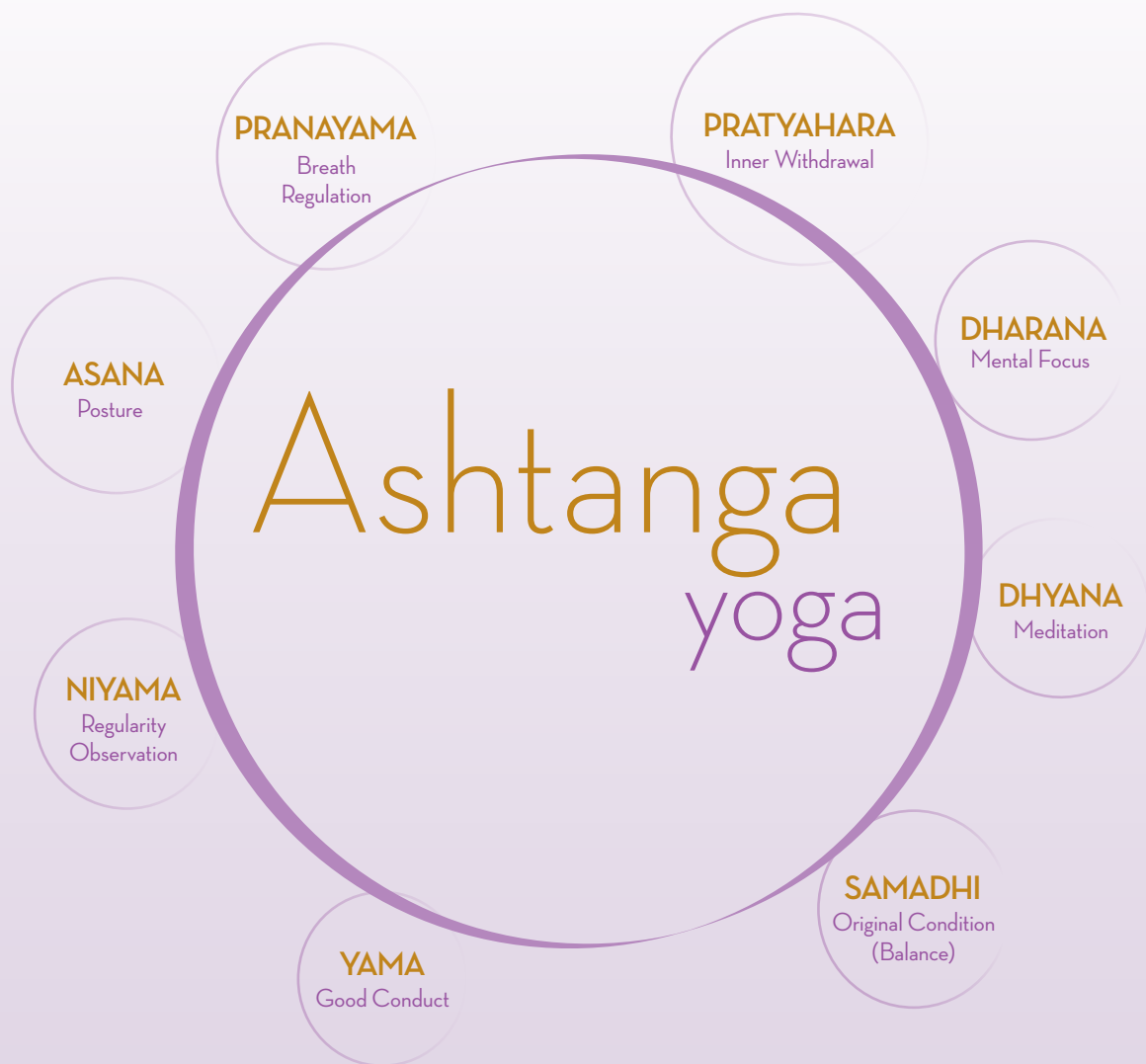
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What if someone told you there was a simple set of practices that could help you manage every aspect of your daily life, and at the same time take you to a level of human potential beyond your wildest imagination? Would you be interested? Most people would at least be curious.

That is in fact an accurate explanation of the practices of Yoga, but most people don't realize it. Yoga includes a holistic set of practices for overall self-development and the well-being of the body, mind and soul. A few thousand years back, the great sage Patanjali compiled the current yogic practices of that time into a simple framework consisting of eight parts or limbs, and that framework is still used today. It is known as Ashtanga Yoga.

But the practices of Yoga have evolved since Patanjali was alive, in response to the needs of the time and especially during the last 150 years. So in this series **DAAJI** explores each limb of Yoga in the light of the modern day yogic practices of Heartfulness. He shows us how to integrate inner spiritual practices with living in the world and refining our personality, so as to create that true state of Yoga – skill in action and integration of the spiritual and worldly aspects of life.

PRATYAHARA

Pratyahara is the fifth of Patanjali's eight limbs of yogic practice. While it is one of the most important concepts in Yoga, it is not well understood. The lack of *Pratyahara* is the reason why many of us struggle with a meditation practice, and also why we don't benefit as much as we could from the practices of *Asana* and *Pranayama*. Here DAAJI helps us to understand the significance and purpose of *Pratyahara* and how to bring it into our Yoga practice.

65

What is the most common problem we face as new meditators? "How can I get rid of all the thoughts and emotions that bubble up when I sit still with my eyes closed and try to meditate?" Whether it's trying to meditate, or read a book or solve a problem, so often our thoughts are pulled in all directions so that we just cannot focus. Do you ever find that even when you close your eyes, the sounds, smells and activity all around distract you from going within? Focusing on external things is easy, for example on a movie or a football game, because our senses are drawn outwards, and are engaged and stimulated. But trying to stay focused inwardly on the object of meditation is often difficult.

Welcome to the fifth limb of Ashtanga Yoga! This quality or ability to turn the attention inwards is

known as *Pratyahara*, or 'gathering towards'. Most people who practice Hatha Yoga or who meditate don't think too much about *Pratyahara*, yet it is vital to any yogic practice.

The first four limbs – *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana* and *Pranayama* – refine thoughts, actions, posture and energy, including the breath. When we reach the fifth limb we are at a turning point, because the focus moves to the mind, the subtle bodies.

PATANJALI'S DESCRIPTION

In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali tells us the following about *Pratyahara*:

2.54: Sva vishaya asamprayoge chittasya svarupe anukarah iva indriyanam pratyaharah

When the *indriyas*, the mental organs of the senses and actions, cease to be engaged with their corresponding external manifestations, and turn inwards to the field of consciousness from which they arose, this is the fifth step called *Pratyahara*.

2.55: Tatah parama vashyata indriyanam

Through that turning inward of the organs of the senses and actions also comes a supreme ability, controllability, and mastery over those senses that otherwise go outward towards their objects.



66

THE SUBTLE BODIES AND PERCEPTION

To really understand this concept of *Pratyahara*, we need to explore the science of human perception, and how we use the sense organs that function as part of the subtle body. We have 19 main subtle bodies, and they are:

- The 4 subtle bodies (*ant*): consciousness (*chit*), mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*) and ego (*ahankar*);
- The 5 energy flows (*pranas*): the inward flow that governs respiration and reception; the downward and outward flow of elimination physically and mental removal; the balancing and integrating flow associated with assimilation and digestion; the ascending flow towards higher levels of consciousness, governs self-expression; and the flow through the *nadis*, the circulatory system, the nervous system, the lymphatic system, muscles and joints, and thoughts and emotions.
- The 5 inflowing senses, the *jnanendriyas*: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
- The 5 outflowing senses or energetic processes, the *karmendriyas*: elimination, reproduction, movement, grasping with our hands, and speaking.

Pratyahara is the ability to divert the flow of attention of the 5 sense organs inwards. It is the conscious withdrawal of energy from the senses. We know how perception happens:

- First we take in impressions from the outside world through our 5 senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.
- Then the internal organs of perception act through the brain centers and relay these impressions to the mind, and
- The mind relays the same through its layers to the soul.
- When these all work together we perceive an external object.

When we allow our senses to look outwards to the periphery, we are constantly pulled to the external world. We are no longer dependent on our inner resources, looking outwards for everything. Entropy sets in. *Pratyahara* is the opposite of entropy. Approached wisely, it is not so difficult to withdraw attention from the senses, but it must happen naturally through a practice that expands consciousness and opens the heart. Later in the article we will explore how Heartfulness practices bring about *Pratyahara* in a very satisfying way.

There are systems that try to force inner withdrawal, by hypnosis, chanting, drugs or suppressive meditative practices, but it is always better to choose a natural path. This gives us a vital clue to how to evaluate and choose a personal practice: “Is it natural? Does it allow me to open my mind, witness its activities, and gently direct the attention of the senses inward?”

Anyone who is able to check the outward flow of the mind, and free it from the bondage of the senses, has succeeded in *Pratyahara*. The mind will anyway bubble up in meditation, as it is its nature to think. Initially, many uncomfortable thoughts and images may come, but each day these fluctuations become less and less, and gradually it becomes calmer. In the first few months of a meditation practice there may be many thoughts, later they will subside, and at some point the mind will be without ripples. And that is the easy part – it is the rest of the day when we are not meditating that requires mastery!

In Yoga, we need to pay attention to *Pratyahara*. Even if we are mastering *Yama* and *Niyama*, *Asana* and *Pranayama*, these four limbs of Ashtanga Yoga need to join with this fifth limb to bring about

real purity and simplicity of character, through mastery of the sensory functions of the mind. And the functions of the mind, the subtle bodies, are the trickiest of all! You could say that this is the beginning of the march to freedom, because before this we are just puppets at the beck and call of our senses and desires.

You may have read the ancient Indian wisdom from the Upanishads, which says,

*Mana eva manushyanam
karanam bandha-mokshayoh
bandhaya visayasango
muktyai nirvisayam manah*

68

*For man, mind is the cause of bondage
and mind is the cause of liberation.
Mind absorbed in the sense objects
is the cause of bondage, and mind
detached from the sense objects
is the cause of liberation.*

MINDFULNESS IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP

Swami Vivekananda once said, “*Pratyahara* is a gathering toward, an attempt to get hold of the mind and focus it on the desired object. The first step is to let the mind drift; watch it; see what it thinks; be only the witness. Mind is not soul or spirit. It is only matter in a finer form, and we own it and can learn to manipulate it through the nerve energies.”

Here in Yoga we find the original roots of Mindfulness, which has traveled and morphed through cultures over thousands of years, and which Vivekananda defines as the first step in *Pratyahara* – to be a witness to our minds. Most of the scientific research on meditation in the western world has focused on this practice of witnessing the mind and the subsequent ability to “learn to manipulate it [the mind] through the nerve energies” – the basis of a lot of modern research in neuroscience.

But *Pratyahara* goes beyond this first step. Vivekananda goes on to say, “The body is the objective view of what we call mind (subjective). We, the Self, are beyond both body and mind; beyond being subjective or objective; we are *Atman*, the eternal, unchangeable witness. The body is crystallized thought.”

He gives us methods to develop *Pratyahara*: “The easiest way to get hold of the mind is to sit quietly and let it drift where it will for a while. Hold fast to the idea, ‘I am the witness watching my mind drifting. The mind is not I.’ Then see it think as if it were a thing entirely apart from yourself. Identify yourself with God, never with matter or with the mind.



“Picture the mind as a calm lake stretched before you and the thoughts that come and go as bubbles rising and breaking on its surface. Make no effort to control the thoughts, but watch them and follow them in imagination as they float away. This will gradually lessen the circles. For the mind ranges over wide circles of thought and those circles widen out into ever-increasing circles, as in a pond when we throw a stone into it. We want to reverse the process and starting with a huge circle make it narrower until at last we can fix the mind on one point and make it stay there. Hold to the idea, ‘I am not the mind, I see

that I am thinking, I am watching my mind act,’ and each day the identification of yourself with thought and feeling will grow less, until at last you can entirely separate yourself from the mind and actually know it to be apart from yourself. When this is done, the mind is your servant to control as you will. The first stage of being a yogi is to go beyond the senses.”

Does this mean that we do not use the senses at all? Of course not – they allow us to navigate in the world and live successfully. Without them we suffer, as people who are blind, deaf

or mute know all too well. So it is not a case of suppressing the senses but of refining them and using them wisely. When I was a young practitioner of Heartfulness, I would observe Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, my first Guide. One of his eyes always gazed towards his heart, focused inward, while the other looked at the world and at all of us, allowing him to guide us and do his work. He utilized the sense of vision in tune with *Pratyahara*. Similarly, he used his sense of smell to perceive the world for a different purpose. In his autobiography he describes how, as a teenager, he developed an instinct to recognize people's clothes by smell: "This developed to the extent that at the age of fourteen I could know the character of a man by the smell of his perspiration." The senses are vital to life and can be very useful, as long as we master them so that they are not at the mercy of external desires.

NATURAL CYCLES

There is another practical tip that helps with *Pratyahara*, involving the *nadis* and breathing. Generally, those times of day when we are breathing equally through both nostrils tend to be the times of *sandhya*, that is, the stationary or turning points in the solar and lunar cycles – sunrise, noon, sunset and midnight. When we meditate at these times, it is easier to turn inwards and be still. Also, when our energies are moving inwards, when the breath is flowing through the left nostril, associated with the *Chandra Nadi* and the parasympathetic nervous system, our senses will easily focus inward and our thought energy will flow inward. We can make use of such periods for *Pratyahara*.

HEARTFULNESS PRACTICES

Modern-day Heartfulness takes us further, as it simplifies and expedites the old path of Yoga. There is no longer any need to take up the different steps of Ashtanga Yoga separately, one at a time. Instead, *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* are all taken up simultaneously. How does this work with respect to *Pratyahara*?

First, Heartfulness Meditation is aided by Transmission, which facilitates effortless inward focus. How? Transmission is from the Source, from the Center, so it calibrates us from the inside out to be in osmosis with the most sublime *Samadhi* from the very beginning. During Heartfulness Meditation with Transmission, transformation happens from the inside out, from *Samadhi* to *Yama*, from limb number eight to one. At the same time, we mold our lifestyle from the outside in, going from limb number one to eight. This two-way approach is revolutionary, because it allows us to experience the eight yogic attributes simultaneously, without such a severe struggle. We are given a cane with which to walk, and sometimes we are also carried like a joey in the mother kangaroo's pouch, so that the journey is one of effortless effort.

Second, Heartfulness Cleaning removes those impressions from our subtle bodies that fuel our desires and activate the senses. In previous articles, we have spoken about all the emotional pulls that we feel due to the impressions we accumulate from our past. Until they are removed, how can inward focus be natural? That is why Cleaning is so important.

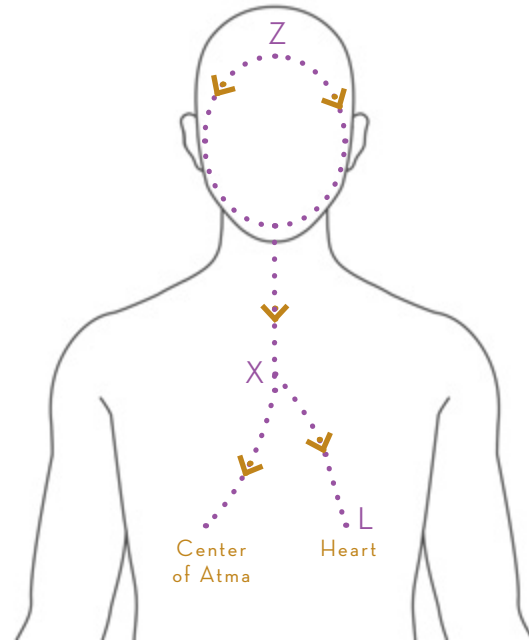


Through these two Heartfulness practices, *Pratyahara* is facilitated, as both the deepening inward focus and the removal of obstacles are speeded up. While we still witness the vagaries of the mind during meditation, we simply ignore the thoughts that surface as they are being removed.

Third, the Heartfulness Prayer is a direct practice of *Pratyahara*. It contains an acknowledgment, “We are yet but slaves of wishes putting bar to our advancement”, and then gives us the solution to take us beyond that limitation, by focusing on a stage of existence beyond the senses. Prayer naturally takes us to the center of ourselves where the senses are not needed in our witnessing. Instead

we are in osmosis with a higher dimension of existence through the heart.

There are also other Heartfulness practices that support *Pratyahara*, including a scientific technique that was developed by Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur. While observing the flow of thought energy, he discovered how it descends from the 'lake of consciousness' – known in Yoga as the *chit* lake – which is associated with the prefrontal cortex of the brain and the *Brahmanda Mandal* or the Cosmic Region in spiritual anatomy. Thought energy descends from the *chit* lake towards the chest area and in most people it diverts to the left side, to the first chakra of the heart. From there it flows outwards into worldly thoughts and activities.



72

Then he observed that if the *chit* lake is first cleaned and a portion of the flow of thought energy is gently diverted towards the right side of the chest, to point 2, the point of the soul, then the seeker will be relieved of disturbing thoughts. By bringing the attention to the soul rather than to desires, the senses are naturally drawn inward. *Pratyahara* and *Vairagya* go hand in hand, and a great hurdle is overcome in such a simple way.

Then there are the Heartfulness practices to maintain the purity of points A, B, C and D around the first point of the heart, where most of the sensory impressions initially lodge in our system. These practices are a daily maintenance regime so that the senses are no longer always searching outwards for stimulation. They can instead rest calm and unaffected.

And finally there is the coup de grâce, the technique of all Heartfulness techniques for keeping the senses relaxed and free from excitement. It is meditation with open eyes, or constant remembrance, in which the meditative

state continues throughout the day. It is the classic example of how Heartfulness works from the inside out. When we meditate first thing in the morning, before the dawn, we are able to imbibe Transmission very easily, because we are cooperating with Nature – we are swimming with the current. The Transmission takes us to deep levels of meditation, where we experience *Samadhi*, that condition of perfect balance that was there before creation. We are at one with the soul. When we emerge from meditation, we allow a few minutes for the condition we have acquired to be enlivened and imbibed, so that we are one with it, in complete union (A E I O U). When we are able to hold this state of *Samadhi* after we open our eyes, *Pratyahara* happens naturally.

We carry on with the day, and that underlying condition stays with us so that we remain connected with it while we do other things. We are in the world, but our senses are not pulled by the world. We retain our equilibrium and imbibe things consciously. We remain alert and aware with a mindful focus, while also being absorbed in *Samadhi*.

There is an Indian fable that explains this beautifully: When the star Svāti is on the ascending horizon, if it rains and a drop of rain falls into an oyster, that drop will become a pearl. The oysters know this, so they come to the surface when Svāti is shining bright in the sky and wait to catch a raindrop. When the drops are caught, the oysters close their shells and dive to the bottom of the sea to patiently grow the pearl.

How can we be like these little oysters? How can we live in the world, while leaving aside outside influences so as to patiently grow the truth (an exquisite pearl) within us? That is where Heartfulness plays its part. When the heart is our focus, everything is anyway connected and integrated. The heart does not distinguish the

physical, subtle and causal levels of existence, because the heart encompasses all of them.

By diving into the heart each morning in meditation, we will become like those little oysters. Then we will arrive at the yogic state of *Uparati*, where we are no longer controlled by our desires and senses, as our minds are all the time centered in Reality.



Known to many as Daaji, Kamlesh Patel is the fourth guide in the Heartfulness tradition of meditation. Embracing the many roles of a modern-day teacher, he has that rare capacity to dive deep into the center of his existence in the heart, and simultaneously have a scientific approach to original research in the field of meditation, spirituality and human evolution. He is a prolific speaker and writer, and you can read his latest book, *The Heartfulness Way*. To learn more about Daaji, go to www.daaji.org.







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Julia Cameron

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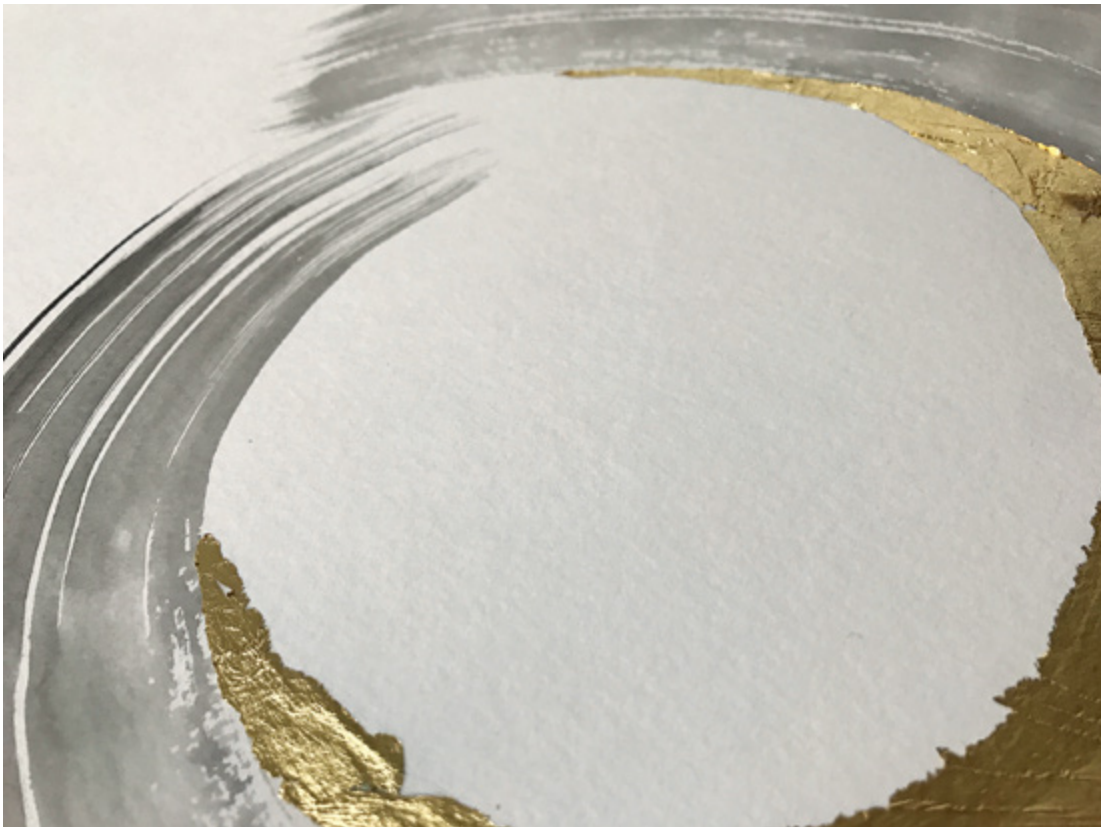
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One-breath meditation paintings

76



Born in 1979 in Belgium to a Turkish father and a Swedish mother, [FILIZ EMMA SOYAK](#) knew by the age of five that visual art was her calling and way of expression. Her heritage, travels and wanderlust provide continuous inspiration and perspective. Motherhood changed her world and signified a major shift in her work to a more mindful practice and a conscious approach. More than ever now she reflects awareness about living in the present.

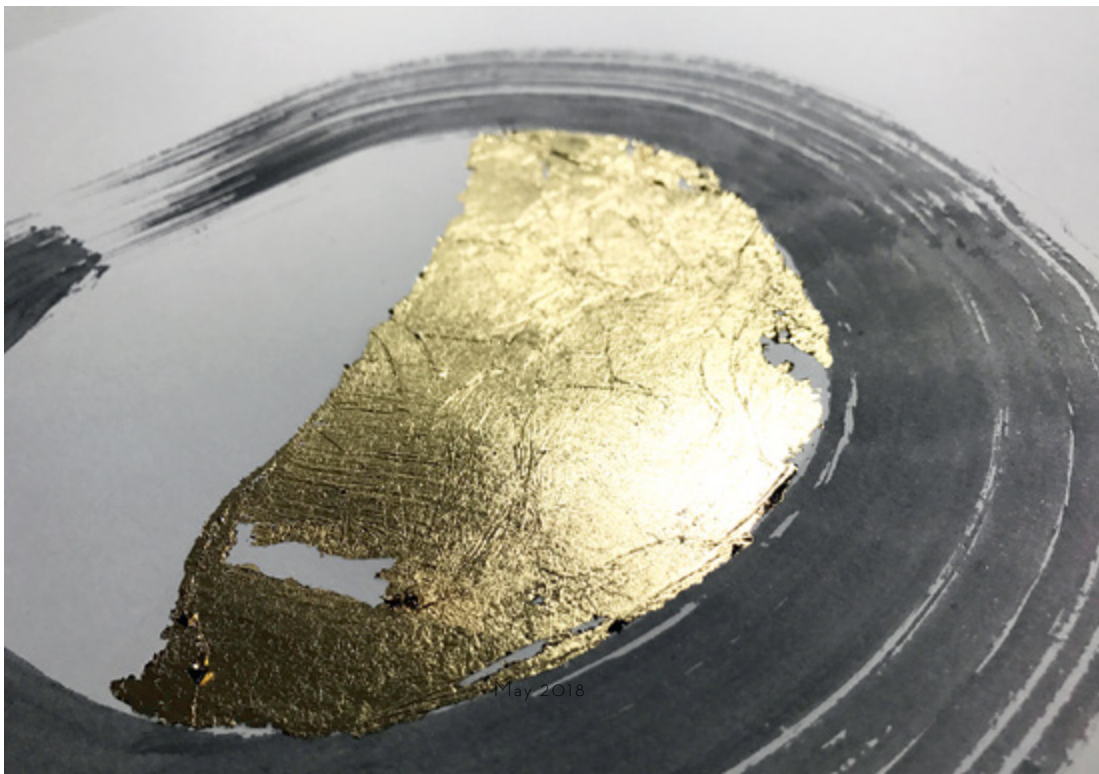
Unu Spiro translates to 'one breath' in Esperanto, a language designed to unite, and one in which everything is rooted in the present.

I began my one-breath paintings as a meditative practice to appreciate the present moment. I became a mother in 2016 to a brilliant soul. My heart expanded, my life changed, and I changed. But as I transitioned into motherhood, I felt more chaos than clarity as the days and nights blurred by with dizzying speed. I observed myself handling everything with less grace and more discomfort than I had anticipated.

Intuition had always been my guide, but I couldn't hear my own thoughts clearly and I lost faith in my instincts. Everything I knew as myself

was no more. While my new life demanded me to be more present, I felt my mind manically jumping to the past and worrying about the future. My breath did not come easily. My body didn't seem to belong to me anymore, and neither did my time. I felt detached from the person I was before. Who was this person? Where was the calm, curious, observant, positive, driven, creative being I remembered as myself? I felt like a shell of my former self.

I knew something had to change.



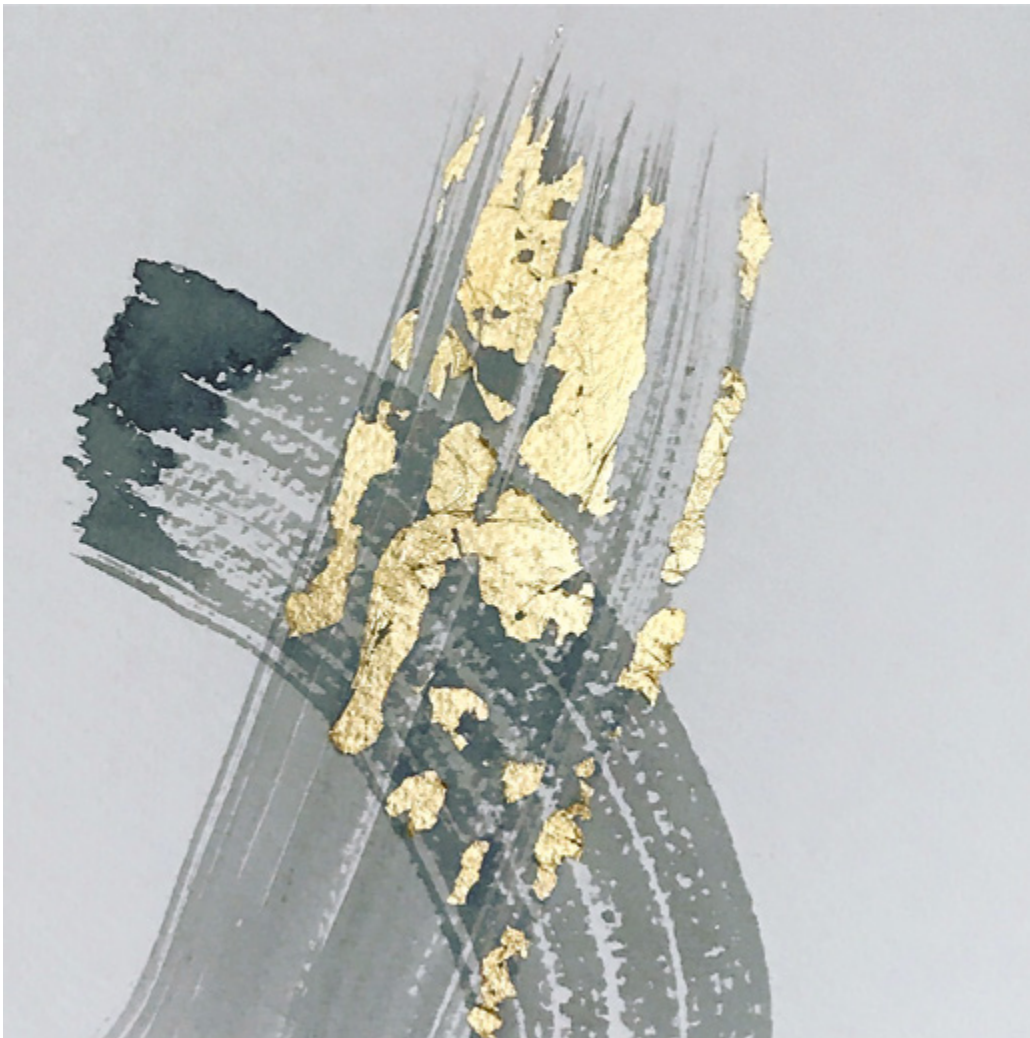
For all of my life, making art has been my way of processing and making sense of life experiences. It is my identity. It is my language. It has also been a practice in mindfulness. But in my new role, I couldn't work the way I was used to. There were limitations on my time and energy, and I didn't feel inspired when I was not able to connect to my intuition.

I had started doing Yoga and meditation in college twenty years earlier. But since having a baby, I

hadn't figured out a way to do much of anything for myself, let alone keep up a spiritual practice. I knew from my experience that it would help. Surely I could find ten minutes!

So, I committed to meditating every day. I noticed a change immediately. Meditation helped me to slow down, to breathe, and to hear my inner voice again. After a few weeks, my intuition told me something I had known all along. The artist in me was still there, and I had to find a way to

78





79

I opened up an old bottle of black ink. There was still some left. I didn't know what I was going to do, but it wasn't about the product it was about the process.



paint again. But I had to simplify and minimize everything – my creative process, the materials, the scale, the colors, and form.

One June morning in 2017, while my daughter napped, I sat in my attic studio with a sketchbook opened to a blank page. I picked up a handmade calligraphy brush I had owned for decades but never used. I filled a ceramic bowl with water – one that I had made in Japan when I was 12. I opened up an old bottle of black ink. There was still some left. I didn't know what I was going to do, but it wasn't about the product it was about the process. I squeezed a dropper full of ink into the water. Watching it drip, then move and morph slowly within the water was mesmerizing. I took a deep breath and raised my brush. Exhaling, I dipped it into the bowl. Inhaling again I pressed the brush onto the paper, and as I exhaled I moved the brush

to make a mark. I felt calmer. With each breath, I painted another stroke. It was slow, methodical, and it felt good. So I did it again and again.

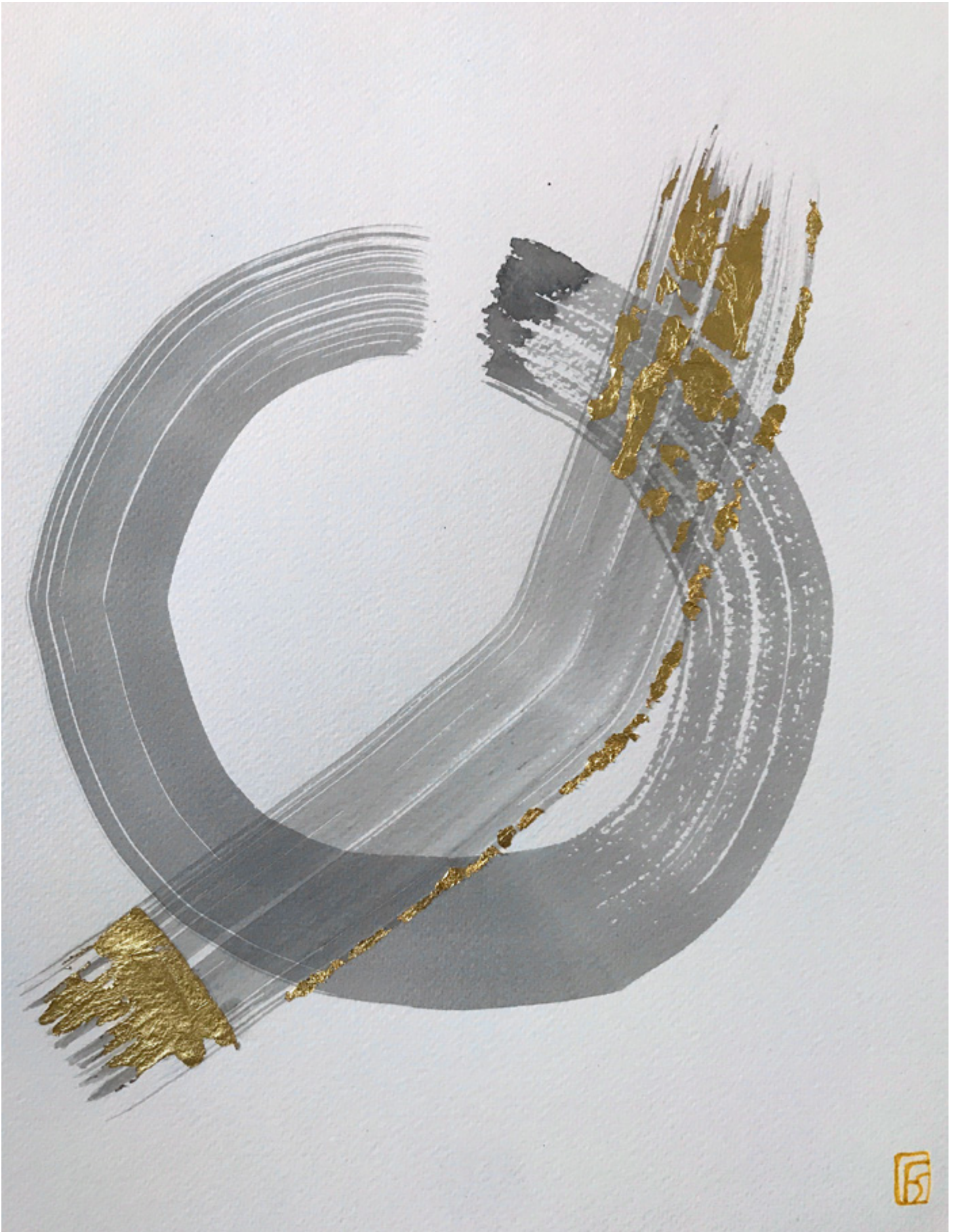
Over time, stories of motherhood unfolded and reflected their lessons back to me in the form of abstract black marks on paper. My creative practice had become my mindfulness practice. My paintings were my meditations, my teachings. My breath had carved out a path for me to center and process my life. I had arrived at Unu Spiro, one-breath paintings, and found stillness, peace, and gratitude for my new self and the present.

Visit Filiz's work at

www.filizsoyak.com

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Heartfulness Yogasanas

GOMUKHASANA



82

Stage 1



Half fold the legs, take the right leg over the top of the left thigh and keep the right foot beside the left buttock, just touching it.

Place the hands on the knees, one on the top of the other - palms facing downwards, arms relaxed.

Relax the whole body, keep the eyes closed, hold and stay with gentle long breaths - in and out six times.

Place the left leg underneath the right thigh and pull the left foot to the side of the right buttock.

Arrange the position of the knees so that one is above the other - right knee is located directly above the left knee.

Both feet are in the same line.

Hold the head, neck and back erect.

Stage 2



Breathe in, bring the right arm behind and place it on the floor behind the lower back.

Bring the left arm over the right leg, crossing over the right thigh.

Slowly twist the upper body to the right side, and look backward through the shoulders.

Both shoulders in same line and feel the twist at the waist.

Gently close the eyes, maintain the posture with gentle, long and deep breaths - in and out six times.



Stage 3

Hold the back straight.

Raise the right arm and place the hand over the shoulders.

Place the left arm and hand behind the back.

Clasp the fingers together. In the beginning this may be difficult, but with practice it becomes very easy.

The back of the left hand should lie in contact with the spine, while the palm of the right hand should point towards the spine.

Hold the spine erect.

Raise the head, so that it faces forward.

Close the eyes, maintain the posture with slow and deep breaths - in and out six times.

Release the position, straighten the legs, repeat the entire practice in the opposite direction (left

side) after coming to *Dandasana* and folding the left leg on top of the right leg.

BENEFITS:

The back is automatically straightened in this posture.

It strengthens the muscles of the upper back, upper arms, shoulders, chest, hips and thighs.

Tones the muscles and nerves around the shoulders and cardiac plexus.

Helps to stretch the hips, thighs, ankles and shoulders.

Helps to remove stiffness in the spine, neck and shoulder.

Gomukhasana induces relaxation. Practicing *Gomukhasana* for ten minutes can ease away tension, worry or tiredness.

Helps to relieve ailments such as diabetes, high blood pressure and sexual malfunctions.

Pelvic and reproductive organs are toned and massaged by regular practice of *Gomukhasana*.

Muscles of the lower back, buttocks and knees are properly stretched and the asana is beneficial in backache, sciatica and rheumatism.



Roasted Cauliflower with Steamed Greens

This is a hearty & tasty recipe, which can be served as a delicious lunch or dinner. The sliced roasted cauliflower and the steamed greens make a very nutritious and fresh alkaline meal. It is simple and quick to make. Enjoy it warm or cold, even the day after.

Bless your food and stay centered and peaceful, and feel how your loving vibrations let you enjoy making this life-giving meal for those whom you love.

Thank you Mother Earth, for providing us with great food,

Simonne

ALKALINE DIET - Plant-based, Organic,
Low-glycemic Index & Gluten-free



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INGREDIENTS:

1 cauliflower
½ broccoli
1 bunch of kale or bok choy, chopped
(you can remove the stems or use them)
1 tbsp extra virgin coconut oil or sesame oil

SAUCE:

4 fresh cloves of garlic, finely minced
½ lemon, zest
2 tsp fresh ginger, grated
1 tsp fresh or dried oregano
1 tbsp extra virgin coconut oil or sesame oil
4 tbsp soy sauce (Braggs or gluten-free are the best)
1/4 cup water (or more)

2 tbsp sesame seeds, roasted
2 tbsp parsley, chopped
Himalayan salt and pepper to taste

Serve with buckwheat or brown rice:
1 cup buckwheat or brown rice

ROAST THE CAULIFLOWER:

Pre-heat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius /400 degrees Fahrenheit.
Prepare and rinse all the vegetables.

Cut the cauliflower in half, down the core. From each half cut 2 to 3 thick slices with a sharp knife.

Place the slices on a baking sheet, brush both sides with coconut oil or sesame oil and season with salt and pepper.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until they are tender.

STEAM THE GREEN VEGETABLES:

Cut the broccoli into small-sized florets.

Rinse the kale and remove the stem. Cut the greens in big slices.

Steam the broccoli florets for 5 minutes, until tender. Rinse in cold water. Drain the steamed vegetables and set aside.

Steam the kale for 2 to 3 minutes. Rinse in cold water. Drain the steamed vegetables and set aside.



GINGER SAUCE:

Heat the oil in a medium pan with the garlic. Sauté for 3 minutes until just turning golden. Stir in the grated ginger and sauté for 1 minute. Add the water and soy sauce and cook for 2 minutes.

You can thicken the sauce with xanthan gum, arrowroot, cornstarch or psyllium husk if you wish.

ASSEMBLE YOUR PLATES:

Sprinkle with salt and pepper, parsley, lemon zest and roasted sesame seeds.

Recipe by **SIMONNE HOLM**
alkaline-institute.com

86



what's up



IMPACT

Heartful Presentation Skills to get your message across

Learn to deliver an effective presentation and get your message across, using Heartful Presentation techniques. For anyone looking to improve their public speaking skills. May 19 th 2018 at 7:00 pm India time, 9:30 am Eastern US, 2:30 pm GMT Led by "Ravi Venkatesan, a Technology Leader serving currently as Chief Technology Officer at Bridge2 Solutions and public speaking coach. —> webinar.heartfulness.org

87

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3 masterclasses

88

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Often the question reveals a lot about the person. It speaks a volume, gives away the character of the person.

- * Person who bows & asks.
- * Person who stands erect with arrogance & asks.
- * Person asks only to prove you are wrong !!
- * Person overflowing with curiosity & zeal while asking.
- * Person asking with lot of humility, gratefulness expressed abundantly....
- * Person asking with an intention of ennobling the other, or highlighting the subject under debate.





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