

heartfulness

Simply living



ASHTANGA YOGA

Daaji sheds
new light

THE HOPE PARADOX

Charles Eisenstein on hope
and the human condition

COMPASSION

Our relationship with
the animal kingdom

Heartfulness

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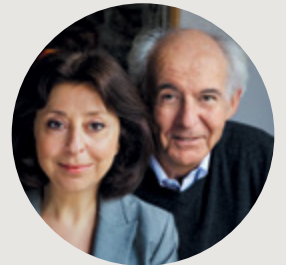
Kamlesh Patel

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 that allows him 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 series on the evolution of consciousness. To learn more about Daaji, go to www.daaji.org.



Roger-Pol Droit and Monique Atlan

Roger-Pol Droit is a philosopher and writer. After having a career as a Professor of Philosophy, he then focused on research at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, and he is now a prominent columnist, and the author of many stories and books. Monique Atlan is a journalist and editor-in-chief of the France 2 television channel. Together they have authored the book, *Does Hope Have a Future?*



Charles Eisenstein

Charles Eisenstein is a speaker and writer focusing on themes of human culture and identity. He is the author of several books, most recently *Sacred Economics* and *The More Beautiful World our Hearts Know is Possible*. His background includes a degree in mathematics and philosophy from Yale, a decade in Taiwan as a translator, and stints as a college instructor, a yoga teacher, and a construction worker. He currently writes and speaks full-time. He lives in Asheville, North Carolina with his wife and four children.



Celebrating the Dawn



The New Year of 2018 is here. What would you say our hope meter should be for the coming year? If you read the news, you may think it is at an all time low, but there is definitely truth to the old adage that the darkest night is just before the dawn. In fact, it is even better than that – the dawn already exists within the depths of darkness, and if we observe humanity today we find that the dawn has been emerging for some time, slowly, quietly, but surely. How to remain hopeful in the midst of nuclear threats, terrorism, significant movements of refugees around the world, climate change, and the breakdown of structures, traditions and the old? How to also focus on the beautiful and wonderful things that are happening in the world? Energy flows where our attention goes, so what do we choose: disillusionment or hope? Do we see the problems that abound as a catalyst for change, propelling us upwards towards a higher vibration?

As a species with the consciousness, mental capacity, willpower and intelligence to bring about change, we are able to weave our destiny and move in the direction we want to go. In this issue Charles Eisentein shares his reasons for hope, especially with the younger generations, and Daaji sheds new light on the relevance of Ashtanga Yoga in today's world, including how these eight practices change our world for the better. In an exclusive interview, Dr Monicka Singh presents her visionary holistic approach to conception, pregnancy, childbirth and parenting, and Prashanth Vasu share some tips on how to transform organizations in the corporate world. There is plenty of scope in this issue for hope, change and celebrating human potential. In the words of George Harrison of the Beatles, "Here comes the sun."

Wishing you all the very best for 2018,

The Editors

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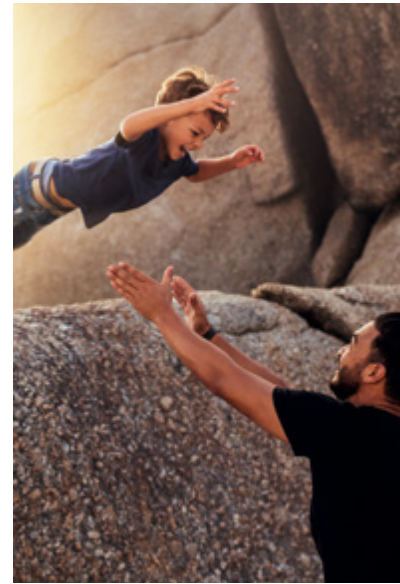
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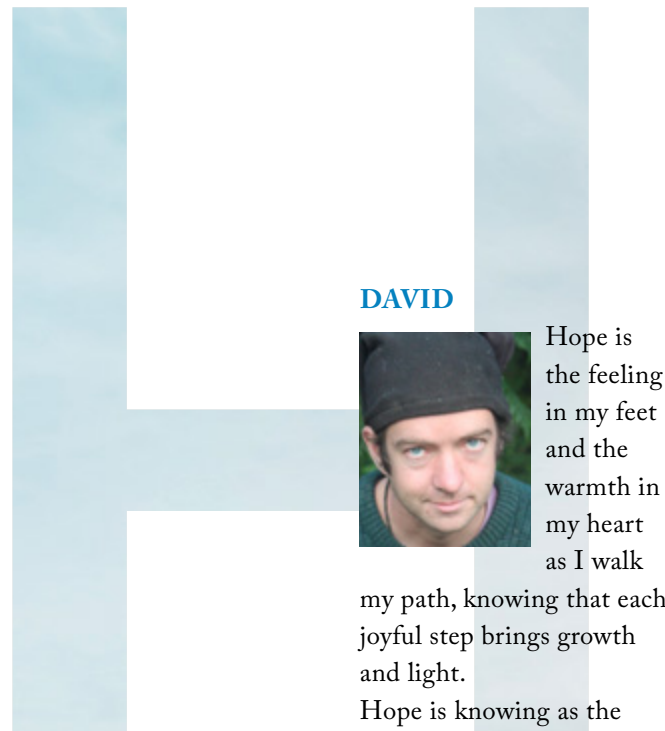
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DAVID



Hope is the feeling in my feet and the warmth in my heart as I walk

my path, knowing that each joyful step brings growth and light.

Hope is knowing as the sun sets on a glorious day the dark night will yield to a new dawn. As the first rays breach the darkness a fire is kindled in my heart. That radiant orange ember I call hope. Hope grows into a burning passion that inspires and lights my way. Hope is eclipsed but remains.

In the depths of sorrow and grief, hope is the glimmer that replaces fear. And in the absence of certainty our minds are free to speculate on the fantastic future that awaits.

If you find yourself spiraling downwards in the clutches of fear, consider throwing away the risk assessment, listening to your heart and reaching for the light of hope.

Edinburgh, Scotland

SCARLET



Hope becomes important when life is hard. The beauty of hope

and the difficulty, too, is that we have to have hope in the face of failure, hope after destruction, hope in the face of trauma, after a loss, hope when facing danger, we must hope even in the face of despair. So hope is an art really, an art where we create an alternative reality to what is now. Even if that reality is only within us for the moment. The power of hope is that our hope can become a reality outside of ourselves. Thus, hope is the fundament of change.

Having hope today is vitally important. When I see the state of the world – how humans are committing every crime imaginable against each other, against animals, against nature – I have to hope. In myself I have to create a world that is better, with all my being I must hope that it will manifest. What gives me hope is when I witness acts of kindness and compassion. It shows me that other people are hoping too.

Toulon, France

ALICIA



I remember my Guide talking about hope and he said, “Without

hope, there is no life. Hope is life.” I feel very in tune with that. Hope is like an engine driving me, the fuel of my life.

It's a permanent conviction that everything and everyone can improve and transform themselves for the better.

Hope is like a powerful alchemist, which permit us even in the worst situations to stand up again, and feel that the next second will be better.

Hope is a recall that life is in motion. It's an attitude we can perceive, and feel the beauty and the field of possibility in each person and each thing.

Now I can say that hope is faith in the Divine. It's superconsciousness in which we consider the Divine in all. It is the breath of life, his essence ...

I work with young people and in the art world.

Recently my Guide told us, “Our work is to give hope.”

It's a challenge but I love it, and hope to transmit also this art of living.

Mulhouse, France

ELIZABETH



Hope has coloured my world and been my constant companion

for the last 18 months since my startling diagnosis of a terminal illness in May 2016.

Although a shock, my experience during this whole rather rocky journey has been one of extraordinary caring, understanding, support and love from those around me! My spiritual guide, fellow meditators, friends and family have been there for me at every moment and I can't be more grateful for this. They have opened their hearts, given of themselves and given and given to meet my every need.

This outpouring of love and care has been one of the main factors that kept hope alive. Hope for me personally in terms of a return to health in all facets, spiritually, emotionally and physically. I believe we need to remain on this planet as long as we can in order to realize our greatest potential. As well as hope for the planet at large.

Sometimes the news is so bleak in this crazy disconnected world and it can be hard to keep clutching to the hope that things can turn around. Our spiritual guides and trainers emphasize the importance of changing ourselves, and in so doing, the world around changes.

My belief is that our hope lies in the love that forms our link in our oneness ... the love that has kept my hope alive on this journey back to health.

Sydney, Australia

LUSINE



Hope gives me the inner feeling to live and to love life and people

around me! Or vice versa, the inner feeling to live and to love life and people around me gives me hope. Just opening my eyes in the morning, I have hope, to live the day today.

The color of my hope is bright and sunny, with raindrops, of course!

Minsk, Belarus

KIM



For me, it's about seeing the beauty in each moment.

It's about steadiness of mind, not wandering into negativity.

It's about choosing to look in the direction of joy, happiness, faith, and not being willing to tread down the path of doubt, fear, and thinking, thinking, thinking. It's the moment-to-moment meditation of life, with eyes open and heart wide open. It has no color, shape or form. It's lightness and love. As one so very dear used to say, where there's life there's hope. I feel hope is an attitude, a state, a condition, a being. Alertness and practice lead me to choose hope in every instant. It makes a pathway to Love. Not an action, but rather a state of being in the heart. That's what hope means to me at this moment!

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Toronto, Canada

GREGORY



Hope comes from Faith. Faith is the foundation, without which it is

impossible to realize Hope. To have hope today is to strengthen the spiritual connection with the inner Self and not to stop the process of evolution. Here and Now.

Hope has no universal coloring, it is individual, and depends on many reasons. In my opinion there is no color, but there is colorless magnetic radiance.

Minsk, Belarus



And the day came
when the risk to
remain tight in a bud
was more painful
than the risk
it took to blossom

Anais Nin

IT CHANGES EVERYTHING

POISE

IS THE ULTIMATE COOL

The other day I was reading about poise – that state of consciousness where everything is in perfect balance. The word poise is synonymous with balance, equilibrium, control, grace and presence.

As a coach and mindfulness practitioner, I became immensely interested in poise, as to me it represented the epitome of perfection – what I have always been seeking – the perfect balance of the material and spiritual lives. That sacred space where everything is as it should be.

Poise is an issue in every arena where relationships impact the quality of collaboration, partnership and creativity. When we lose our poise in predictable patterns, we are stuck, unable to tap our limitless powers. Then anger, irritation, impatience, self-pity, and victimhood pose considerable problems for colleagues, partners, spouses, or supervisors, but even more so for us.

According to Gary Stokes, the author of *Poise: A Warrior's Guide*, modern organizations require men and women who have enough self-

awareness to sustain balance, composure and equanimity in the face of extraordinary challenges. Stokes says that, when poised, we are fully present in our environment, glad to be alive. Balanced and composed, we are able to draw all that is pleasurable from any situation. Poised, we are able to be connected, grateful, creative and light-hearted, no matter what is happening. In other words, poise is the ultimate cool, attractive and sane.

Stokes also examines the great costs to us when we lose our poise: we make

mistakes, our judgment is distorted and we make bad decisions. Our enjoyment of life is diminished and our potential evaporates temporarily or even permanently as we lose access to our love. Failing to sustain poise, we remain trapped in a limited life, circling in an eddy, going nowhere, stuck in a universal pattern of negative thinking and behavior. The most impactful statement for me is that the universal cause of lost poise is self-pity.

Self-pity is often our response when something happens that we don't like. We become a victim in order to explain why we feel bad. We blame someone else: "Someone is doing this to me!" We tell sympathetic people our victim story, and they oblige by saying, "Oh, you poor thing," or something similar.

Then we obsess and hope that divine justice or our own acts of revenge will bring our adversaries down. As long as we feel sorry for

ourselves, we will lose our poise. Our potential will be blocked, and our lives will remain trapped in an eddy as we go round and round, feeling as if we're on the move, but actually going nowhere.

Living a life of poise implies that we are able to deal with everything that comes to us. We use every challenge thrown at us and everything is a source of learning.

Stokes uses a Poise Checklist to get back to poise when we are upset in any way. Here's his list:

- Am I in the present right now?
- Am I connected to others with love, and am I connected with my values, my mission, and myself?
- Am I grateful right now?
- Do I have access to my creativity, improvising, refusing to be trapped?
- Is my heart light, unburdened by my own heaviness and self-absorption?

We may still lose our poise once in a while, but we know what to do – get back into the present, reconnect, give thanks, improvise, and laugh at ourselves.

No matter what is happening, poise is the ultimate cool.



DR NANDINI SHEKHAR reviews the 2011 book, *Poise: A Warrior's Guide* by Gary Stokes, and is inspired to follow his guidance in her day-to-day life.

Is Compassion ONLY FOR HUMANS?

JUDITH POLSTON is a member of Mercy for Animals. She gives us a broader and encompassing vision of compassion, and asks some challenging questions.

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Heartfulne

Compassion is when we have sympathy and concern about another's suffering and misfortunes. When we feel heartbroken by another person's misery we may instantly want to act to relieve their pain. And compassion is about 'action'; it is not just being empathetic. How do we really know if we have real compassion? What comes first – love or compassion? How are they intertwined?

One of my spiritual Guides gives a hint when he says: "Love has to be compassionate. It cannot have joy at somebody else's suffering. Love, compassion and mercy are not three different things. Love in action is mercy and compassion."

Spiritual growth brings us to our original state, which is pure love, and in this state compassion and mercy are automatically felt for the sufferings of others. And this extends to animals as well as humans. Animals have souls and need our protection. Any dog or cat owner will tell you with conviction that their animals have

feelings and connect with them on a soul level. Scientific studies show that elephants, birds, chimpanzees, giraffes, cows and sheep mourn their dead and feel suffering. The paradox is: we love our pets, yet we eat other animals.

Due to the worldwide practices of factory farming, animals are sometimes raised in torturous conditions only to meet violent deaths to feed humans. In 2001, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) stated that 45 billion animals were slaughtered worldwide for human consumption. This figure has risen to 55 billion in 2017, and it does not include the tons of fish that are killed for the same purpose each year. Some of these animals don't even make it to the slaughterhouse, as they die prematurely from stress, disease, handling, transportation and deprivation.

While many of us are vegetarian, dairy foods and eggs are still often part of our diet. Cows are artificially impregnated



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*All beings tremble before violence.
All fear death.
All love life.
See yourself in others.
Then whom can you hurt?
What harm can you do?
He who seeks happiness
By hurting those who seek happiness
Will never find happiness.
For your brother is like you.
He wants to be happy.
Never harm him
And when you leave this life
You too will find happiness.*

*Dhammapada 129-130,
translated by Thomas Byrom*



Animals, like us, are living souls. They are not things. They are not objects. Neither are they human. Yet they mourn. They love. They dance. They suffer. They know the peaks and chasms of being.

Gary Kowalski

many times in their shortened lifespan, just to give milk. We human beings are the only species that consume the milk of another species. The calves are not only deprived of milk, but they are taken away from their mothers within one to three days after birth to be slaughtered for veal. Chickens and pigs live in terrible environments and die painful deaths for us to have bacon and eggs in the morning.

This information, while hard to hear, is important to know in order to change our eating habits and lifestyle. An ancient Vedic teaching, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, meaning 'One World, One Family', tells us to love and respect all human beings, animals, trees, rivers and mountains as one. *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is an important virtue: to avoid harming all living creatures.

So are we really compassionate, merciful human beings? As we evolve, are we sensitive enough to the killing of other beings? These are the questions we need to ask ourselves.

References:
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service; Animal Aid
<http://www.vegnews.com/articles/page.do;jsessionid=B43CBA0870DEE9DEB97C2983484B17D1?pagelid=10079&catId=5>

Seeds OF HOPE

PARTHASARATHI NARAYANA is inspired by a childhood memory to value hope and perseverance.

In my childhood days I used to spend a lot of time with my maternal grandfather, who stayed in a farmhouse on a beautiful farm. There were cows, chickens and the entire place was lively with a refreshing atmosphere. One day, when I was walking with my grandfather, I noticed a sugarcane farm on fire. Initially I thought it was due to an accident, but when grandfather explained that the farmer had intentionally lit the fire, I was shocked. Why would somebody do that intentionally?

Grandfather explained that the jaggery prices were too low that year and there were no buyers for sugarcane. The farmer couldn't cover his costs of manufacturing jaggery, and could not afford to lose money in doing so. Instead he allowed the cane to dry out and set it on fire. When I asked my grandfather, "What will he do for his living?" he didn't have an answer, but his expression said everything. A few months later, I saw the farmer planting sugarcane in the same field he had burnt a few months back.

This incident happened 15 to 20 years ago, but it keeps popping up in my mind every now and then. Was the farmer's action a reflection of perseverance or hope? At some point I even thought he was foolish to commit the same mistake by planting the same crop, but then another perspective arose in my mind, which created a great respect for farmers in me. I felt that his perseverance in the face of life's unpredictability was possible only because of hope.

A farmer's life is full of gambles. For one thing, crop prices are not fixed. Another is that nature is not always kind to farmers. They are not only dependent on the rains and climatic conditions, but even the insects, animals and birds all have an impact on the successful yield of the crop. Despite all the possible extremes, farmers continue to sow their seeds with hope and they feed humanity.

RISING ABOVE

inner turmoil

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DURGA NATARAJAN shares her favorite tips on how she handles inner turmoil and regains a sense of well-being.

Many times I find that we cope with stress, anxiety, and inner restlessness by indulging in things outside ourselves. The other day after work, a friend of mine had come home to chat about some issues she was going through. As I was showering, I heard her singing a melancholy Hindi film song downstairs. Her voice grew louder or softer depending on the thoughts in her mind, and I felt heavy in the heart listening to her singing. I could feel that she was trying to keep her mind from wandering into the



multitude of family and career issues she had on her plate.

Retail therapy is another well-known way that we try to forget about problems, but again, how well does it work? These behaviors are just symptoms of our inner disturbance, our way of trying to cope with feeling uncomfortable, so how to treat the underlying cause? Our inner apparatus goes through a lot of wear and tear, just like our bodies, and often needs attention from us.

When inner turmoil strikes, here are some things that have worked for me:

- Relax and calm yourself down.
- Sit quietly and connect with your inner self.
- For some time of the day, don't indulge in any activity. Just be in the moment.
- When you feel a little better, get up and analyze the situation. It's not always as bad as it seems. Acceptance changes the situation a lot as you start feeling it can be dealt with.
- Find out the pros and cons, and what can be done in the present moment.
- Listen to your heart's guidance on what to do and follow it.

In a nutshell, treat it internally. It will take you a long way.

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THOUGHT in action

If your actions
inspire others to
dream more,
learn more, do more
and become more,
you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams

how to transform ORGANIZATIONS

PRASHANTH VASU explains the value of meditation in the corporate world, and outlines specific ways it can transform organizations by transforming individuals who work for them.

The need for a NEW WAY

On the one hand, corporate life is a redeeming force as it helps raise the standard of living of human beings by facilitating job creation at scale. Economic growth has become the yardstick for measuring progress and the corporate world is a vital vehicle to enable this. The second and third order benefits of economic progress are also well researched and understood.

However, the flip side is becoming more evident in what is now called the VUCA world – volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous. Long and late hours are now routine. With the rise in global trade, working and traveling across cultures and time zones have become the order of the day. Thanks to the forces of technology and urbanization, the need for organizations and employees to rapidly and continuously change has become permanent.

These are not ordinary disruptions and the sheer intensity of professional life places an acute strain on individuals. So, loss of balance is a threatening counterweight to the benefits

we enjoy through our professional life. Associated lifestyle disorders and the growth in chronic diseases are natural corollaries, and the very benefits of wealth, health and education that economic progress brings are being eroded away. When individuals are thus de-centered, an organization's performance suffers.

Can we stifle economic progress or slow down the pace of corporate life? It's difficult to imagine. Instead we need to look at changing our ability to cope with increasing demands and in fact, drive peak performance in this VUCA setting. This requires implementing practices that restore balance in individuals and thereby enable organizational performance.

Meditation is an age-old tool that does restore this sense of balance. Its benefits on the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels are becoming increasingly evident through scientific research. Progressively, it is moving from a mystical practice that is



to be undertaken in seclusion, with the aim of achieving a spiritual goal, to a practical tool that can be integrated into daily life, with the aim of helping us lead a productive, purposeful and joyful life.

Heartfulness Meditation is a unique method that helps us acquire and operate from a deep sense of centeredness. Practitioners of Heartfulness actually experience an inner balance even while being intensely active. We are able to perform closer to our real potential. We witness the continuous change in our own consciousness and are, therefore, able to better adapt to the demands of the world.

When individuals in an organization embrace meditation, the organization at large benefits – it is also able to perform and transform simultaneously. Here are some specific ways in

which the benefits of Heartfulness Meditation can manifest individually and organizationally.

Clarity and PRODUCTIVITY

The first benefit is the clarity of thought of a mind that is well-regulated through meditation. This in turn positively affects our productivity and efficiency.

Uncluttered by the traffic of thoughts, through meditation the mind becomes focused and is able to attend to one topic or issue at a time, giving it full attention. Significant time is saved in avoiding distractions and we are able to accomplish a lot more with this clarified mind than we would otherwise. This capacity is a vital



asset, especially for senior executives who often have diverse tasks to manage on a daily basis.

Intuition and DECISION MAKING

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The second benefit is the intuitive capacity of an intellect that is fine-tuned by meditation. This in turn positively impacts the quality of decision-making.

Often times, sub-optimal decisions on important matters such as staffing key roles, and go or no-go decisions on key business choices, are taken in reaction to external pressures or on the basis of past prejudices. Such decisions by senior executives can have drastic effects on an organization.

With an intellect that is refined through meditation, the basis of decision-making shifts from reactive to intellectual (logical and data-based) to intuitive (also perception and wisdom-based). Imagine the benefits of this capacity in our VUCA world where the velocity of decision-making is very high – it can shape an organization's destiny!

Empathy and COLLABORATION

The third benefit is the capacity to feel and empathize that develops out of a heart-based meditation. This in turn makes a dramatic difference to collaboration and coordination in an organization.

Most business processes require multiple functions to work in a coordinated manner. Often, these processes are sub-optimal due to the strain in interpersonal relationships between people in different functions, such as manufacturing and sales, product development and manufacturing, etc. When our hearts' intentions are purified through a heart-based meditation, we can progressively learn to see the connectedness in the world, to trust and to place the interest of the organization over that of our specific function and in turn over our personal benefit. A more empathetic and non-judgmental approach starts pervading our interactions and we become more proficient in wielding the magic instrument of feeling beyond only rational thinking. As a corollary, win-win solutions naturally emerge to challenges. Organizations with a good proportion of emotionally intelligent

individuals lose minimum energy in internal friction and are, therefore, fully available to serve their clients and stakeholders.

Joy and PURPOSE

The fourth benefit is a sense of lightness and joy that emerges when our consciousness itself evolves through meditation. This positive energy helps create a purposeful organization that is both given to continuous improvement and resilient to shocks in the external world.

A heart-based meditative practice creates unconditional joy and fills our lives with positive energy. As we learn to be meditatively active, even intense work starts energizing, rather than draining us. We are thus able to better balance professional and personal life. An organization with a healthy proportion of such joy-filled individuals is better positioned



to continuously improve and renew. Such organizations are purposed for excellence.

An organization as a HUMAN COLLECTIVE

Just as an individual has a physical and subtle existence, we can very well consider an organization to have a physical and a subtle existence too. The physical existence of the organization comprises its hard assets and infrastructure while the subtle existence is its collective mind, intellect, identity and consciousness created by its people. The hard assets are easily replicable. So, truly distinguished organizations differentiate themselves based on their subtle existence or soft assets, which is essentially their people.

When organizations have a healthy proportion of heartfelt professionals, they can simultaneously perform and, transform in this rapidly evolving world. Heartfulness Meditation is a simple practice that allows us to acquire and operate from a state of balance. Through the unique method of Yogic Transmission, the time and effort required to acquire such states is substantially reduced. Heartfulness regulates the mind, fine-tunes the intellect, purifies the heart and, as a result, our consciousness evolves. We can perform closer to our true potential and also transform to suit the needs of the hour.

There is an old saying that perfection of the whole happens through perfection of the parts. Given the time we all spend in our corporate life in this day and age, organizations will benefit by supporting employees through the personal process of realizing their inner potential.

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THE HEARTFUL PRESENTER

PART 7

In the last 6 articles, RAVI VENKATESAN has shared ideas about the reasons public speakers fail, the 26 Cs of good communication, body language and voice modulation, the 'power of pause', and the need for presence and empathy. In this final article of the series he explores the Impact we can make as speakers.

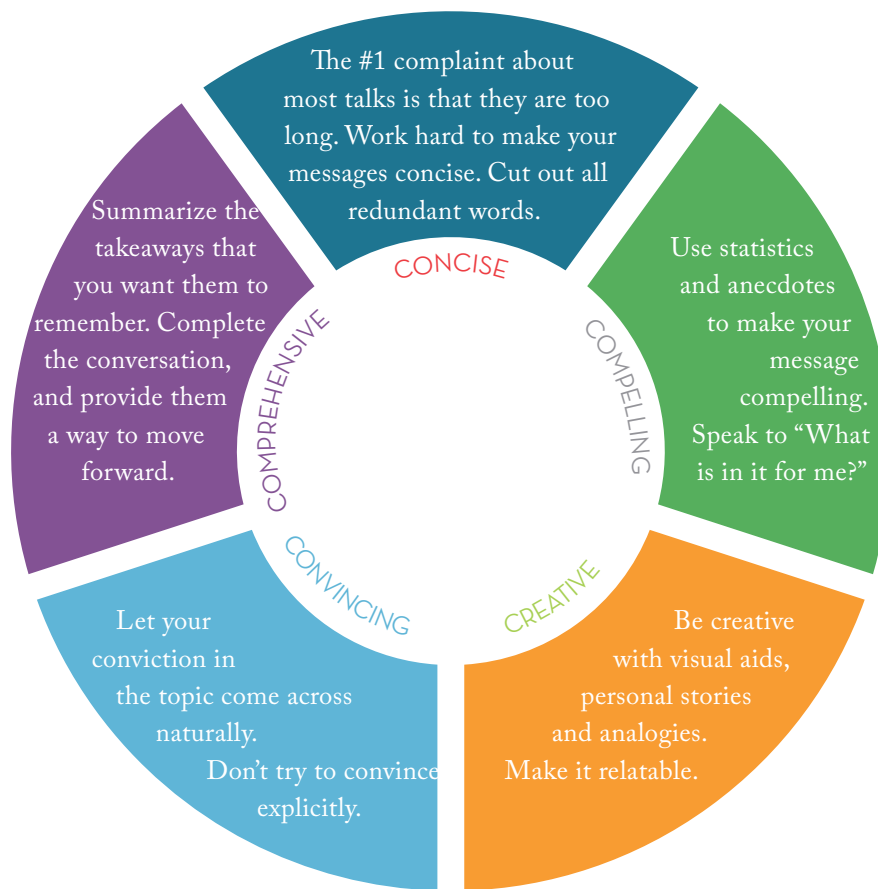


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Impact is what you leave with your audience. It is the result of your communication and is how it will be remembered.

Many times speakers deliver excellent content, have several important messages in their talk, make a lot of great points, and even make a really good connection with the audience. Even still, the audience leaves without much impact. How can we ensure that this doesn't happen to us?

There are 5 Cs that will ensure that you have an impact on your audience every single time:



01

Assume that you've just talked about the importance of improving the city's public parks and play areas. You've covered many points and made many arguments. Now summarize everything in terms of 3 key takeaways and 1 most important thing to remember. This summary should take less than a minute.

02

Assume that you've conducted an introductory workshop on Relaxation and Meditation. You've also talked about the benefits of incorporating these practices in day-to-day life. Summarize the two top benefits, and remind your audience of the next steps they should take. For example, "When you get home today, please take advantage of this opportunity and register for a free one-on-one session with an instructor via our website."

03

Practice delivering a punchline after setting it up at the beginning of your talk. For example, at the beginning you might say, "We are going to dive into what inflation and life expectancy increase are doing to retirement plans. I promise to share a solution with you today." After covering everything, you can refer back to this promise and deliver a unique idea or suggestion, for example "As promised, I want to leave you with a solution. By adding 3% to your retirement savings now, while you are in your 20s, you will be covered for an extra 15 years of retirement."

Here are a few exercises to sharpen your ability to deliver the right impact:

27



DORIT VAARNING first traveled to India to meet Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur in 1978. She shares some of her experiences of being with this humble, insignificant being, who is known to many as Babuji.

One Who ONLY GIVES

It is a bit difficult to tell stories about Babuji, because I have the feeling that my stories tell more about myself than about him. For, after all, who is he? What I could see was only what I was capable of realizing, and what he permitted me to see.

The second time I visited him, his head became transparent to me and inside I saw planets moving, following their courses according to the cosmic law. It was like looking into a watch. And though this vision was limited to the inside of his head, I was gazing, like through a window, into the unlimited universe itself. The following time I came to Babuji, I saw his head like an open bowl in which there was nothing.

I remember one day he was sitting in his chair with a big flock of people around him, filling the terrace. I came late, and since the only place left was at his feet, I was ordered to sit there. Then we started to ask questions. I asked, "What is love?"

Babuji created a beautiful image for us: "Love is what is alive when a flower blooms, and will never come again when the flower closes."

The second part of this definition disturbed me deeply, so I asked, "But does love have to go away? Can it also stay?"

Babuji looked down at me tenderly and said softly, "Yes, it can come and stay forever."

Then Babuji gave his final definition: "Love is craving for Reality. Opening yourself to Reality and Divinity is love."

After some time I asked, "What is grace?" Again those soft tender eyes met mine and he said with a smile, "Grace is sweetness of mind."

My heart melted in the love of his eyes, and I could only sigh.

Babuji seemed to think over it again, and confirmed, "Yes, it is correct."

Then another question came to me: "Babuji, what is passion?"

He answered as if making a rhyme, "Excitement in fashion is passion."

Then he put on a doubtful face, "It's not correct," he said. But then he came back to the same idea.

"Babuji, what is sin?"

"Improper adjustment of things."

Babuji was the most original, poetic and humorously meaningful person one can imagine.

*Love is craving for Reality.
Opening yourself to Reality
and Divinity is love.*



Once in Munich in 1980, I asked him, “Babuji, what about divine intoxication?” And he answered, “Well, I may not say anything against it, since I myself am a smoker!” Then after a while he asked me suddenly, “Why don’t you just jump into the infinite ocean?”

One evening in Copenhagen, also in 1980, people had gathered in his bedroom to spend those cozy evening hours with him when generally he would be in the mood to talk. That evening he was sitting up in bed in front of everyone, totally ready for a conversation full of wisdom and laughter. But no word was being spoken. Babuji looked here and there, obviously up to something, but kept quiet.

After some time, he looked around with an apologetic look: “No thought coming,” he exclaimed.

Silence again all over. Suddenly, he rose up as if some event had happened.

“That was a thought!” he exclaimed, and stared at something invisible, like gazing at a shooting star. This went on for a while, Babuji being in quite a humorous mood.

Finally he remarked, with the most humble, timid look you can imagine, “A thought is a vibration from the Divine, not from such a low being like me.”

And very small, with a shy smile, he lay down in his pillows.

During Babuji’s visit to South Africa in 1981, someone asked: “What is the correct behavior after one has hurt somebody?”

*I asked him what
saintliness was.
He replied, “Gentlemanliness, humility.
One who only gives and never asks for
anything in return.”*

He answered: “To be in yourself. That is something within.”

“Should we avoid hurting others at all costs?” “Medium, moderation. Avoid giving trouble to others. That is a divine dictate. Not to hurt others is the greatest religion. I am not like a wasp that if somebody steps on it will sting. If somebody steps on me, I’ll be crushed and die. ... you should never hurt the feelings of other hearts. You should play

the defensive part, not the offensive one. When self is involved, defense is right.”

During those last hours with him in South Africa, I asked him what saintliness was.

He replied, “Gentlemanliness, humility. One who only gives and never asks for anything in return.”



FOCUS

HOPE

Love recognizes
no barriers.
It jumps hurdles,
leaps fences,
penetrates walls to
arrive at its destination
full of hope.

Maya Angelou

by their
fruits
ye shall
know them



It takes going to a music festival to inspire CHARLES EISENSTEIN to explore the paradox of hope and despair that confronts global human civilization today. He shares what he does to honor both perspectives to explore the way forward for our species.

I'm dealing with massive cognitive dissonance right now. Multiple contradictory beliefs and perceptions inhabit my mind, each compelling on its own terms. How do I choose?

I'll share two of the most contradictory. Last weekend I spoke at a wonderful music festival near Asheville called Kinnection Campout. I've not yet been to a festival with such a positive, friendly, gentle atmosphere. The entrance booth staff were jovial, the security personnel solicitous, and I didn't see any of the aggression, bad drug trips or drinking that is often an undercurrent (though usually not dominant) at such festivals. It occurred to me that this event was a field generator for a 'new normal' of compassion and sharing on Earth. What fed my optimism the most, however, were the astonishing conversations I had with young people there about topics like subtle activism, social permaculture, regenerative politics, indigeneity, and so forth – conversations that basically did not exist when I was in my 20s.

They embodied understandings that took me decades to develop and that I still inhabit most tenuously. What will they accomplish from this place that they are seemingly born into, or reach with just a single activating experience? Nor, to address the skeptics among you, were these people weekend philosophers who play with these ideas in between workweeks. They had little buy-in to the rewards and promises of the system, little ambition in the conventional sense. For them, the old story is finished. Even if they are yet a minority among their age

cohort, they provide ample proof that the consciousness behind ecocide and injustice is changing.

My second input has come in the days since the festival as I've immersed myself in my book research. I'm looking at some of the direst predictions of climate change which, in case you weren't aware, basically entail the near-term extinction of most species on Earth, humanity with them. Of course I've been aware of this narrative for a long time, but actually engaging the data about the various positive feedback loops is driving it deeper into me. Earth has already passed the tipping point into catastrophic climate change. Even if we eliminated all fossil fuels right now, that wouldn't be enough to arrest runaway warming. The IPCC's position is extremely conservative, and even its recommendations are politically unfeasible. In the face of the facts, any optimism I might feel from the festival is a delusion.

Yet then I return to the still-vivid memory of those beautiful, alive faces, the clear eyes shining with the light of deep intelligence, and I know deep within my being that, somehow, the logic of despair is a false logic. I cannot muster any convincing evidence of its falsity, but I know it nonetheless. Am I to trust that feeling I am calling 'knowing'?

In fact, I can construct a rational narrative – highly implausible though it may strike the conventional mind – in which we can avert civilization-destroying ecological catastrophe. It comes from the understanding that the modern worldview, which is at the root



of the ecological crisis, also generates our understanding of what is possible and how to effect change in the world. Stepping outside of it, as so many of those young people have done, opens up wider domains of the possible and the real. We can see the lineaments in everything we call holistic or alternative: technologies or modes of technology that produce impossible results.

This will be of small comfort if you wholly embrace the modern worldview and dismiss everything that deviates from it. But if you have experienced what we've been told is impossible, then the impossibility of humanity making the transition is no longer so clear. If someone can recover from 'incurable' stage 4 pancreatic cancer, what else is possible? What is the correlate of that on the level of politics or ecology? This is a question many of these young people are beginning to explore.

That is one thread of my narrative of optimism, tenuous though it may seem to you. I won't go into the others, because my point is that the

feeling I got from the festival is not wholly at odds with reason. Nor, however, does it constitute proof. Each of these two narratives stands in self-sufficient wholeness, a reality unto itself. Which, then, shall I believe?

There is a saying from the Bible: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Each of these beliefs bears different fruits in me; each corresponds to a state of being. I find the near-term extinction narrative to be paralyzing. It demotivates anything I might do to serve healing in the world on any level. What issue that I care about matters in the face of it?

The other narrative, which I'll call 'the evolution of consciousness that will save the world', confers on me an enthusiasm to serve that evolution in all its manifestations and practical applications. This narrative is not without its pitfalls: self-righteousness, spiritual elitism, and escapism are among them, particularly when it is ignorant of the very real facts on the ground. The horror and suffering on this planet extend far beyond

climate change. In fact, I believe climate change is a symptom of a deeper illness that will continue to generate crises even if it turns out to be less of a threat than we think. To bypass the planet's hurts and perils and to deny their accompanying grief through spiritual bromides like, "It's all happening for a reason," or "The shift in consciousness will save us," is to divert the expanded creative and healing powers of the new story away from their necessary purpose.

The illness seeks the medicine. The multiple crises that we face are precisely commensurate with the capacities they will draw forth from us. That is why both narratives I have voiced above are necessary. We must apprehend the illness, or the medicine will remain inaccessible, stunted, an embarrassing secret in the cultural closet called 'alternative'.

Gazing into the most hopeless and horrifying phenomena on the planet, our own hidden wounds and unprocessed grief surface for clearing, and we discover that each form of denial – the outer circumstances and the inner wounds – mirror each other. For our optimism to be genuine as well as effective, it must countenance what is actually so.

I am fond of saying that no optimism can be authentic that has not visited the depths of despair. But today I have realized a corollary: no despair is authentic that has not fully let in the joy. Festivals like Kinnection exercise a powerful practical function by obviating the logic of despair and bestowing enthusiasm and motivation to serve the birthing of a more beautiful world. It is not that an internal inconsistency in the logic is revealed; it simply becomes somehow less relevant, less dominating, and less captivating. Without, at first, *reasonable* cause for hope, we find we no longer need reasons. Experiences of play, joy

There is a saying from the Bible: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Each of these beliefs bears different fruits in me; each corresponds to a state of being.

and communion insinuate an unreasonable knowledge of expanded possibilities. Without these, the gloom-monger is missing an important data point. Few will listen to him because they will intuit that his despair is a joy deficit disguised as objective reasoning. Whatever he is missing, the young people I met at Kinnection, and the event itself, seemed to radiate.

So if you want to be effective in spreading alarm, go to some festivals or other places of your greatest joy. And if you want to be effective in spreading joy, visit your places of greatest grief.

I am of course aware of the political critique of festivals like this one: that they are diversions for the privileged that make our unjust and ecocidal world a little more tolerable. But I hope I have shown that they are also the opposite: they make that world *less* tolerable. They give us a glimpse of the world as it could be, and they nourish us with the inner resources and outer connections to serve that world.

Has hope a future?



Photographe Philippe Matsas

MONIQUE ATLAN and ROGER-POL DROIT share a very European perspective on the need to revive hope in the 21st century, despite the many reasons why people have given up hoping for a better future.

Hope is supposedly a very simple and familiar concept. Yet your survey has shown that it is far more complex than it seems, as throughout the course of history hope has often been obscured and belittled. Could you please tell us more about it?

It is actually very simple. Hope is a human strength par excellence. It is what makes us move forward, act, progress, etc., even in the worst of circumstances! So it is wrong to believe that hope is at odds with action. In fact, there is no action without the hope that it will succeed, and yet to expect success the action must have already started.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult to precisely define what hope is. It is at the same time a wish, a desire, and an expectation of something better, but it's not only these things. Being the matrix of our lives, and of our individual existence as well as of our collective challenges, hope cannot be framed within a rigid concept.

Hope is fraught with ambiguity, plurality, and it is always impure, that is, it is woven from conflicting feelings, illusory beliefs, magical thoughts and dreams, as well as reasoning and probabilities. Hope is both a call-to-action and at the same time it is based on emotional thinking.

Our research into the history – particularly in ancient Greece, in Jewish sources and in Christian thinking – shows that hope is always

two-sided and ambiguous: individual and collective, earthly and heavenly, fluctuating and unchanging, etc.

If you imagine that it is only for good things, bound to have a positive outcome, you would be quite wrong: terrorists also hope for the maximum number of casualties.

Of course, there have always been highlights when the collective hope was positive. The Age of Enlightenment and the social movements for emancipation in the nineteenth century are good examples, as people believed that human progress would follow. More knowledge and accessible education, a greater number of tools and methods, and freedom and ethics were all supposed to follow. Such was the great hope that progress represented – a continuous and triumphant hope.

But as the 20th century showed, culture and progress do not safeguard us from barbaric acts, science can also bring destruction, and better tomorrows can lead to totalitarianism and terror. So we now have a tendency to shun hope, and most of the time we'd rather live without it.

Can we possibly live without hope?

Of course not! Hope is a constituent of the human condition. Our primary question has been: How is it that collective hope should break down, whereas individuals go on having

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40 personal hope and plans for themselves and for their relatives? All the polls and surveys show that the very people who claim that they are pessimistic about the future of their country or of humanity also claim that they are rather optimistic as far as their personal situations are concerned. In other words, hope is indeed what the psychologist Guy Lavallée calls an 'energy matrix', the source of our plans and actions, even though collective expectations have currently lost momentum.

If we are each imbued with such a deep sense of hope, how is it that we no longer dream of a future that reflects our inner hopes?

That is what we have tried to diagnose through what we call a 'philosophical un-blocking' in order to rekindle it. We know that we cannot force hope on anyone, so our challenge is to revive the process by giving it the consideration it deserves and by better understanding its limits and mechanisms.

The current eclipse of our collective hope is above all due to the disasters of the last century, to our having lost our sense of history, to a weakening of the awareness we have of inheriting from the past and of needing to build a future, and to the triumph of presentism¹ and immediacy. But there are also more profound and ancient causes, which are to be found in our European culture.

We have seen through the ages that any universal feeling of hope has not been loved by our philosophers, at least most of them. Therefore, as far as hope is concerned, the failure has also been in our thinking.

Starting with the ancients and the stoics and moving forward to our contemporary philosophers, practically no one has given particular and prominent attention to hope. Either they ignore it, avoid dealing with it, express a lack of confidence or reject it outright. The rationale they use is always the same: to reject hope in order to avoid all the risks and discomforts due to the fear of unfulfilled hope. They then attach value to the present only, to living in the moment, in order to guard against all the uncertainties and expectations that hope brings.

Here are a few examples:

"Don't hope and you will be fearless," the stoic philosopher Hecaton of Rhodes used to say, as quoted by Seneca.

Montaigne added, "Fear, desire and hope impel us towards the future; they rob us of feelings and concern for what now is, in order to have us spend time over what will be – even when we ourselves shall be no more."

As for Spinoza, the greatest hope fighter, he wanted to chase away all sadness in order to reach the wisdom that could be drawn from



philosophical joy. He concluded by saying, "In proportion as we endeavor to live according to the guidance of reason, shall we strive as much as possible to depend less on hope."

We could also quote Schopenhauer, Heidegger, Camus, Comte-Sponville and many others. In spite of their different philosophies, they all agreed that hope is a harmful illusion, and we must rid ourselves of it. The fear of being disappointed made them throw the baby out with the bathwater, because hope implies taking a risk!

You said, "Hope should be the main instrument for building a new future." But

how is it possible in a world where we have lost all our illusions?

It is possible, provided we stop confusing hope and illusion. Losing our illusions does not mean losing hope. On the contrary, hope is a means to practice gaining insight. Our gross desires and our scattered aspirations need to be carefully refined. They must be sifted, channeled, rid of their superfluities and fantasies, and adjusted to reality. If that is wanting, hope remains a mere mechanical repetition of the same formulas and therefore it is totally useless. It is worth working on hope, and worth tempering it.

¹ Philosophical presentism is the view that neither the future nor the past exist.



What can we hope for nowadays ?

No period in history, even the darkest, has ever seen hope disappear completely. Its flame lingers, even when everything seems to want to blow it out. That is why, at the heart of the great tragedies of the 20th century, Ernst Bloch and Hans Jonas embraced the idea of a world that constantly needs constructing; a world where the central dimension of life dwells in the future. Here comes the most important lesson to remember: hope requires thinking beyond oneself.

So we appeal for a total inversion of the western philosophical software. Instead of being

essentially focused on the individual's thought at the moment of death, we need to think beyond ourselves, about all living creatures, and about what we have to transmit to future generations. As long as we remain focused on the individual alone and facing death, the world and time will appear absurd. But if we accept the idea of human beings carrying on, then we place ourselves in an unfinished project, one that is always open and under development.

So hope can be shared, right ?

The philosopher Catherine Chalier pointed out that "Hope is always to be shared." Sharing it is the essential dimension, as hope can never

be lived by one person alone. As Erri de Luca wrote in his book, *Alzaia*, the Hebrew word *tiqva* simultaneously means hope, a rope and a climbing team. It is the rope that binds prisoners to each other, but it also keeps human beings together and gives them some freedom, just as alpinists secure each other. Hope is never a solo race. It binds us and we pull together when we share that hope.

What would you like to say about hope to the youth of today ?

We have no ready answer and no unfailing know-how. The issue is for us to understand, and then to help them understand. We must tell the youth about the past, about the depth of our history and about those who defended our civil liberties all through the course of history. We must explain to them that immediate gratification cannot be the only prevailing value, and that the super heroes in Star Wars and the Avengers who fight off evil fail to reflect the full picture of the world. Finally, we must relentlessly draw the line

between a virtual and a real world, since confusing them only leads to unrealistic expectations.

We do not hold the keys to the future. It is up to the youth to forge these keys, provided that we, the adults, are fully aware that the world doesn't end with us, and that transmitting to future generations will reopen the horizon and hope.

As a matter of fact, there can only be hope if and when we accept that the world does not end with us, and that we need to build it over and over again, all together. Hope is what makes us act, due to the shared conviction that the game is still ongoing, that the world is not yet complete, and that the story continues.

Yet if we want to advance, we do still need the story. Hope must be formulated, and it must be told, put in words, myths and stories. We must talk about it, transmit it, and live it. It also requires imagination and vision. Such tales

are actually missing and they must be created and restored so that hope has a foundation, the ground on which to stand.

And for you personally, what gives you hope ?

The fact that the unexpected does exist and that it endures. Let the story remain unfinished. Remember that the inscription above Dante's Gate of Hell reads, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here." What defines hell is that it is a confined space, with no possible openings or dreams. Conversely, in our world, human dignity consists in constantly maintaining aspirations for a better world. Ernst Bloch, in his book *The Hope Principle*, showed that he well understood that our being aware of the future was an engine for all human beings. He stated that, "So far, hope has remained as Antarctica." We do think it's high time for hope to be explored.

To explore these ideas further, read their book, L'espoir a-t-il un avenir?, published by Flammarion in 2016.

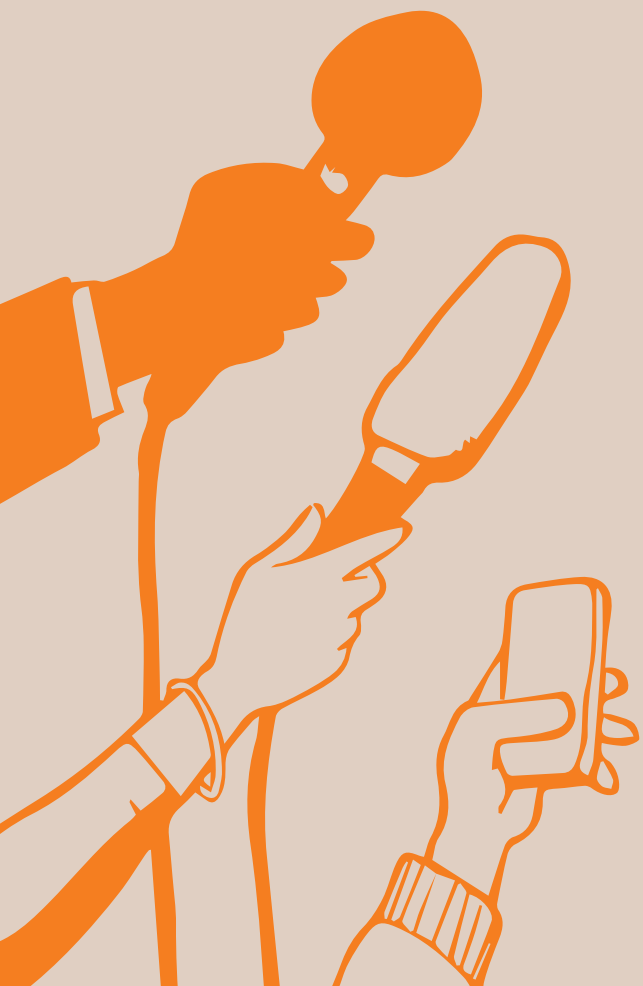
The interview

It is not the time or place
but the attitude of the couple that matters.

At the moment of conception,
based on the vibratory level of those two,
the soul with that corresponding vibratory
level will descend into the womb
that has the specific vibratory level.

It matches.

Kamlesh Patel





Conscious parenting

MONICKA SINGH is full of life!

In this interview, she shares some of the ways that she helps couples with conscious conception, pregnancy, birthing and parenting.

Q You are passionate about your work! How did you get into this field, which is so tied to human evolution?

There is always a story that triggers and motivates us to our path. In 2007, I experienced something very profound, when my husband contracted a viral infection. He is a pediatrician and had picked it up from one of his patients. When children are infected by this virus, it is usually okay, but when it is an adult it can be fatal. So he had developed fluid retention in his entire body, especially in the pericardium, the wall of the heart, and he almost left us. He was in bed for around eight months, when he was about to be taken for surgery to remove the pericardium. His life would have been that of a vegetable. Both of us had very vivid colorful dreams for the future, and this was not in sync with what we thought our life would be.

So we were struggling, and life was chaotic. One day, in the autumn of 2007, something happened to me. At the time my husband was not allowed to walk more than 150 meters, in case he became breathless. I went to a park, which was around 900 meters from our home, and sat there praying.

Then I called him and said, "You come to this park and take me home, otherwise I am not coming home. And please come alone."

I just sat, thinking, "Let it be today, whatever is meant to happen."

It was a good one and a half hours of waiting, sitting with my eyes closed. When I opened them I saw my husband walking into the park. The doctors had said that he would not be able to walk beyond 200 meters, but he had actually walked down three flights of stairs, then 900 meters to the entrance of the park, and he came walking all the way to where I was and sat there.

Then we started coming back again. Within a month and a half, his entire disease had vanished, all the fluid in all the layers of his body had gone, his heart was beating normally, he had shed fifteen to twenty kilos of weight, and was full of vigor.

The doctors said, "It's a miracle!"

It was not actually a miracle. We had tapped into the power of the subconscious mind and reprogrammed it. We shifted our belief system and we came back to life. So then I understood that this is the way of life. At that time I had no knowledge of the subconscious mind. I was only involved with my children and family.

We had been living in Delhi, where my husband was running a multi-specialty hospital. But after all this we shifted our base



So in the Cosmic Conception program, we help parents to be conscious of their thoughts and emotions. They know they are invoking a soul who is going to begin a journey on Earth.

are thinking is already affecting the child's subconscious mind. At the time a child is delivered, more than 70% of his or her subconscious mind is already blueprinted, and these are the codes on which his or her future lies.

So this has been my journey, and how I was inspired. Then I did research on my patients and now we are getting wonderful results in our hospital.

to a rural area near Dehra Dun, an area with no medical facilities, where we set up our hospital and started working with conviction and faith. It is a beautiful area in the foothills of the Himalayas.

There this landed! I used to have vivid dreams and visions, and I was guided to understand that life does not start after the birth; it doesn't even start during those nine months of pregnancy, or at the time of conception. Instead, our life starts when our parents think about us. So when parents think about becoming parents, the child's journey begins. And whatever they

Q Tell us about the work you do with families.

Our entire program is called 'Awakening in Womb', and we start right from the very beginning. So our work supports:

- Consciously conceiving the baby.
- Consciously carrying and nurturing the baby.
- Consciously delivering the baby.
- Consciously raising the newborn baby.

We have also started a program called 'Cosmic Conception' where our would-be parents experience a rise in vibrations through different modalities to help attract a higher vibrational soul into their lives. They understand that they are receiving a gift in this soul, this baby.

Q How do you work with parents to bring about conscious conception?

In the realm of energy, like attracts like, so you will often hear parents saying, "This child is just like me." Why do they say that? The energy with which they conceive a child, the emotions that they hold at that particular moment, are totally transferred to the baby. So the baby will initiate his or her journey with that coloring, that intention, that energy.

So in the Cosmic Conception program, we help parents to be conscious of their thoughts and emotions. They know they are invoking a soul who is going to begin a journey on Earth. They have to be aware of what they are starting with. We help them address and embrace any non-serving attitudes they may have, like their fears, their anger. They don't have to overcome anger or fear. It is better to accept it and embrace it and be good with it to the point that it no longer matters and they feel well about it. Their hearts become hopeful with compassion and love, so everything finds its own position, and this is when conception happens. The child will also begin the journey with compassion and love. We have done our part.

Q Wonderful! What about during pregnancy? How do you support parents so they can nurture their babies in the best possible way?

We have two ways. The first is with people who have conceived consciously, as they have already started from a particular level. But most of the couples coming to our hospital do not know about Cosmic Conception, so with this second group we work on the principle that 'your unborn child is your spiritual guru'. In other words, whenever a couple has conceived a baby, that soul is there in their life as a guiding force.

Essentially, pregnancy is a time of great transformation, and a great leap in the journey of evolution of the souls who are parents. Pregnancy accelerates the journey. So all the programs, patterns and social conditionings rise to the surface, and that is why we say that the mother has a turbulent phase of ups and downs of emotions, because things pop up from the subconscious mind.

So we work with pregnant women in classes, identifying what is manifesting in their lives right now. We help them to accept what emotions are surfacing, rise above them, and move with the vibration. It is all about acceptance. They do it with a lot of love and consciousness. Of course the programs are structured – we give them dos and don'ts, some practices, meditation, etc. – both face-to-face in our hospital and online. There is a full nine months program that they follow. The mothers help themselves by doing the practices, and become very conscious of their pregnancy.

Q Are the fathers involved as well?

The fathers are very involved, because the father is impacting the mother, who is impacting the baby. I always say that a family with a strong father is a thriving family. The father has a huge role, because the mother's emotions and mental strength are somehow directly connected with those of her husband. The father's support is very important in this entire program.

Q I am sure you are aware of the Epigenetic studies on this, so can we say that you are working to help create the environment so that the physiology of the mother is most conducive?

It is all about that. Epigenetics is mainstream now. Research has shown that every single gene can express itself in more than 20,000 different ways depending upon the environment, so it is all about creating the environment for the baby to grow.

This baby starts with two cells, and becomes a trillion-celled body, and this construction is happening inside the mother's womb. This is not just the construction of the child; it is also the awakening of the mother. That is why we call the program 'Awakening in Womb'. Both mother and child are awakening. The construction material is important: food is very important, but not just food. The water a mother drinks, the air she is breathing, the thoughts she is having, and her energy levels are all accumulating and constructing the child's body. I am not just talking about the physical body – all the bodies. So the construction of

Every single gene can express itself in more than 20,000 different ways depending upon the environment.

the entire blueprint is happening right there inside the womb.

Q It is amazing! Let's move on now. How do you work with mothers through the birthing process?

This is my favorite part! During the birthing process, I call these mothers divine goddesses. They are the chosen ones, as they are bringing about life, and the way they bring life into the world is extremely important. When we as women can turn that pain into pleasure is when we are able to do everything.

As doctors, I think we have a great role to play. First of all, there is a lot of fear surrounding a delivery. The people attending are not sure how it is going to happen, if it going to be a normal delivery, a forceps delivery, a Caesarian section, etc. The first thing that we as doctors can do is to erase that fear around the birthing process by telling mothers that this is the most natural process to happen in nature, that she will be guided, and that her entire body is working and everything is automated. Did she



conceive by asking a sperm and an egg to get together and make a body? No, it just happened. Similarly, giving birth is an automatic process. She simply has to remove the thinking brain and everything happens on its own.

When there is fear, then a mother may more easily attract a lot of unpleasant things and difficulties during the birth. So in our hospital we try to ease the mothers completely, removing any fears around the birth, by reminding them of that deep faith that everything has been taken care of.

Then there is a structure that we follow, using music, positive affirmations and meditation. This way, during the birthing process, the mother is relaxed and able to communicate with the baby. That is so important, because it is the baby who is making his or her way through that birthing canal. So imagine if she is able to communicate with the baby, reassuring him or her that "This is a beautiful world, a world of peace and compassion. I welcome you here, my child, with all my heart. Please come, I am waiting for you."

Then the baby has a better chance to come out naturally, because he or she is secure. This is it.

Q Lovely! After the birth, there is another level of transition in family life for both parents. So please can you tell us about conscious parenting? What support do you offer new parents?

Conscious parenting starts with the birth. The moment the baby is out, he or she is put directly to the mother's heart, as the sound of her heartbeat is familiar. This reduces any fear the baby may have in this new environment, because he or she is received with love into the world and feels secure. After that, we hand the baby over to the father, who sits cuddling and caressing his newborn.

In contrast, if a baby is born in a very mechanical manner and then put in a nursery, separated from the parents, which is unavoidable if it is a traumatic birth, imagine the amount of fear

the baby has. They will experience all the alien sounds, the alien light, and many strange voices. They become fearful. So the first impression, the first imprint after delivery is that of fear. Today, so many babies experience such an imprint in hospitals around the world, and, as a result, they constantly live with fear even as adults, because it is the first impression they have of the world outside.

So what happens to the child in the first few hours after the birth is very, very important. That is the base, the foundation. When the first impression is that of love, that becomes the foundation from where life goes on. Such children are generally compassionate, loving and settled children. They are not anxious babies, they cry less and they demand less, because they are secure. Babies often cry and demand a lot when there is some insecurity, some fear, which parents don't always understand and the baby can't explain. By the time the child is older and can express how they feel, they have already accepted this fear as a normal way of life. This is how we are as individuals.

As conscious parents, we can help our children be what they are supposed to be by understanding that they are not 'ours', but instead they are other individuals coming through us. Whatever thoughts, belief systems and conditioning we may have do not need to be transferred to our babies. They do not deserve that. They will do better with neutrality so that they can build their own belief systems.

Q A lot of people reading this will want more information. Not everyone can travel to Uttarakhand, so how are you reaching out to others?

We have a website called Miracle Medical Mission – www.miraclemedicalmission.com, we do online workshops and then we have the handholding program for the nine months of pregnancy, which we also do online.

Q Would you also be willing to train medical personnel from other parts of the world if they could come to your hospital?

Yes, definitely, because this is the way of life ahead. It has to be a train the trainer approach. We all have to come together and work as one force. We also have a Facebook group and we are trying to reach out to as many people as possible.

Q Can you tell us about your two books?

My first book was co-authored and is called *Miracle Mission*, in which I have written about my own journey. My second book is called *Awakening in Womb*, in which I have written all about conscious conception, pregnancy, birthing and parenting.

I also discuss infertility issues, and especially what can be done before resorting to IVF and surrogacy. We have an 'Accepting Your Fertility' program, so that couples can learn to accept their own fertility. It is a beautiful 45 days to 2 months program, and again it is a very structured program. It is working because people are having their babies!

INTERVIEW BY ELIZABETH DENLEY
To contact Monicka, you can write to dr.monickasingh@gmail.com

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BE inspired

Today the evolution theory of the ancient Yogis will be better understood in the light of modern research.

Swami Vivekananda

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.



YAMA

the five vows of the seeker

Yama is the first of Patanjali's eight limbs of yogic practice. DAAJI expounds on this very first rung of Ashtanga Yoga, and explores its importance in self-development and the path of enlightenment.

Why does behavior matter so much in the spiritual field? And does it matter only in the spiritual field? Human beings have always valued nobility of character, kindness, generosity and humility. We have also always venerated the people throughout history who embody those values or principles.

When you remember the meaning of the word 'Yoga' it becomes clearer. Yoga means union, integration, oneness, including the integration of our inner and outer states of being. We cannot be saintly on the inside and also greedy, arrogant or angry in behavior – that would be a lack of integrity. That lack of integration is not natural and leads to personality disorders; it is the opposite of holistic.

Ultimately, there is no inside and outside but one fluid state of being. So if we are going to embark on a spiritual journey, our character must go with us.

In today's world, this aspect of Yoga is not well-understood by Hatha Yoga practitioners and meditators alike, who are often happy just to do their practices. Why? Maybe because it means looking in the psychological mirror in order to change. Spirituality is not a path for the faint hearted. Swami Vivekananda once said, "I need lions not sheep." Have you ever wondered why such a great being said this? It is because every single moment we must work on ourselves to refine our lifestyle if we wish our consciousness to blossom.

While meditation with Yogic Transmission transforms us swiftly from the inside, melting away obstacles to progress, stripping away our limitations at the very root, life demands something more of us. Our inner world may be expanding and evolving, but if our personality and lifestyle lag behind then we will remain spinning, like those little mice in their running wheels. We will not be able to move forward on the journey.



58 So what sort of a lifestyle is demanded of a seeker of the light? When Patanjali formulated his Ashtanga Yoga some thousands of years ago, he naturally included the refinement of personality and lifestyle as part of yogic practice, and he did so in the two limbs known as *Yama* and *Niyama*. Here we will explore those fundamental qualities espoused by Patanjali in this first limb, *Yama*. I like to describe them as the five oaths of a seeker.

The word ‘*Yama*’ has different meanings. In Sanskrit, it means ‘regulation’ or ‘self-discipline’. Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh wrote,¹ “Giving up untrue feelings and untrue thought is *Yama*. *Yama* means to give up. *Yama* is the giving up of unwanted things from the heart.” So *Yama* is the removal of everything that is unnecessary for our spiritual journey.

In Hindu mythology, the God of Death is also called *Yama*. How to reconcile this idea of

death being intertwined with the refinement of lifestyle? One answer lies in the right understanding of life itself. Physical life begins with conception and ends with the withdrawal of the soul. This does not mean suicide. The real secret is to ‘die’ while still alive, transcending ‘I-ness’ to become universal. Meditation is also the process of consciously transcending the individual self, so that we can merge with the universal consciousness.

Another way of saying it is: live as if you are going to die the next moment. This constant reminder of *Yama* as death may on the surface sound morbid, but there is tremendous wisdom in this idea, which is to transcend the ‘I-ness’ of the ego with love. The ego can be a very restrictive force – it doesn’t let life blossom – but when this transcendence happens the ego becomes our ally and evolutionary in its purpose. The willpower of the ego moves from being self-centered in individual consciousness to being in tune with universal consciousness.

¹ Complete Works of Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh, Vol. 2, 2013, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, India

Where we go wrong is in thinking that this is all about physical death. Here death is not of the physical body, but of our self-created accumulated identity in the subtle body – the layers of our persona. Transcendence means such refinement of the subtle body that it becomes pure and expansive, without individual heaviness.

There are basically two aspects to this refinement. The first is the removal of all the heaviness from the subtle body – the impressions we have accumulated from our own past – so that it becomes so light that consciousness can soar higher and higher. These impressions are called *samskaras* in Yoga. This process leads to the death of our own individual network of complexities – beliefs, emotions, fears, habits and desires. Many people try to let go of the past through psychoanalysis and personal therapy from the mental level, whereas in Heartfulness the practice of Yogic Cleaning removes the very root of the problem, the *samskaras*, by directly cleaning the subtle bodies. This process is so effective that the impressions from one lifetime can be removed in one meditation session with a trainer.

But if we don’t also then work on removing the behaviors that are the outer manifestation of those impressions, we end up re-creating the same heaviness again. Like the mice on the wheel, we go round and round, removing, re-creating, removing, re-creating. It is a never-ending cycle unless we make behavioral and lifestyle changes.

The second aspect is the further refinement of the four main functions of the subtle body – consciousness, the thinking mind, the intellect and the ego:

With meditation on the heart, the mind deepens from thinking to feeling, to simply being, and then finally to unbecoming or unknowing, towards nothingness. It refines towards the subtlest state possible.

The intellect deepens to intelligence to intuition to wisdom and also finally to a higher state beyond wisdom, known as unknowing or higher ignorance – again it zeroes out. Guidance henceforth will descend from beyond.

The ego moves from a selfish focus on ‘I’, gradually refines to selflessness and generosity of heart, then absolute humility and acceptance, and finally only the finest state of identity remains.

As these three subtle bodies are refined, consciousness is untethered and is able to expand into its infinite state, merging with the universal consciousness.

If this could be achieved only through spiritual practice, everyone would reach the destination in no time at all. But does the ego easily move from selfishness to generosity of heart? Not without a fight! Do we easily trust the wisdom of our hearts, happily residing in a state of unknowing, dependent totally on something higher? That would mean ignoring the pros and cons of the rational mind that are dictated by our own principles and constructs. It takes time to let go of all this and let consciousness soar into universality. It is a process that requires *Yama* and *Niyama* side by side with practice.

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Yet with this transcendence we experience real aliveness for the first time. What is aliveness? It means to live life with the heart; a life that is now connected to the eternal and the immortal; a life where there is neither bliss nor sorrow, neither pleasure nor pain. With such a transformation comes the wisdom to conduct life with self-discipline or *Yama*.

That is why in Heartfulness we start with the last three limbs of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga – *dharana* and *dhyana*, culminating in *samadhi* – so that we develop the inner capacity and aliveness to then develop self-discipline and nobility. Inner transformation is the catalyst for bringing outer change. The other five limbs

are then naturally supported by the newly cultivated balanced tendencies of the mind.

This sequence is more practical than trying to refine character from the outer perspective of changing the persona, because behavioral change is most possible in someone with a well-developed *manomaya kosha* or mind sheath. It is certainly not possible for anyone who still has a heart full of the *samskaras* of desire, worry, anger, fear or guilt. It cannot be imposed artificially from the outside and be real.

This state that *Yama* brings of self-discipline is beautifully described in the yogic literature

as being in this world but not of this world, symbolized by the lotus that lives in the mud but is not polluted by it, instead radiating purity and beauty. So these five vows of a seeker are for living life bravely and not straying away from a noble life.

Let's explore them in more detail.

The purpose of embracing truthfulness, non-possessiveness, moderation, honesty and non-violence is to allow peace to prevail within. Peace is always there. It is our nature. It is only when we embrace lies, dishonesty, cruelty, violence and selfishness to possess things that we lose peace. Moreover, if the peace becomes a means to achieve something else, then that very act will become a hindrance to our evolution.

These five qualities form our spiritual foundation. In fact, no spirituality is possible without them. Becoming or imbibing these qualities prepares us for better and nobler experiences.

possessions and ultimately ourselves. Is this not compassion? It is sad that under the spell of hatred, people destroy each other.

Be truthful: Satya

The second *Yama* is to be true to yourself. We all know the famous statement by William Shakespeare: "This above all: to thine own self be true."

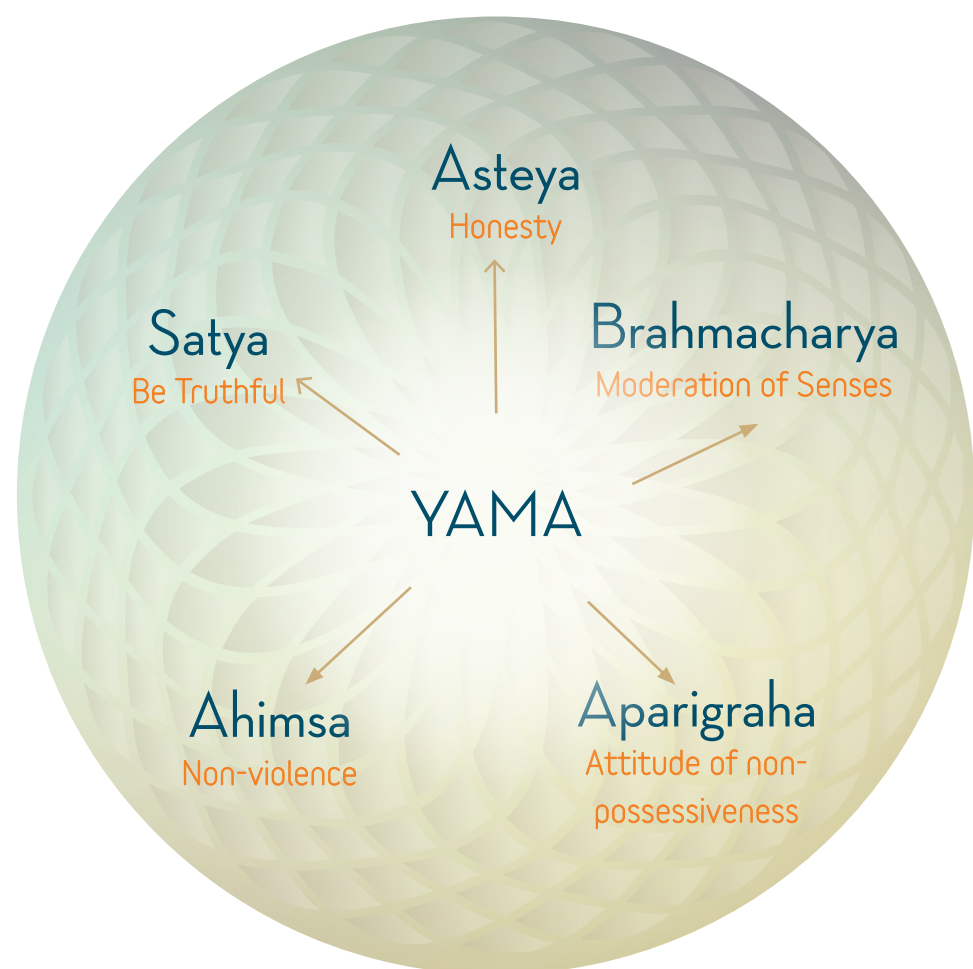
Be genuine, original and authentic. Say what you mean and mean what you say. No hidden agendas. No masks. No hiding faults and no camouflages. There is childlike innocence, purity and simplicity in truthfulness. Being truthful, while at the same time ensuring that the truth never hurts the heart of another person, is only possible if *ahimsa* becomes a part of us.

When we do not follow the heart, we will sometimes follow wrong guidance. We suffer from an untruthful heart and the coercions that result from it. This leads to a lack of authenticity. Then our inner environment is messed up and wrong habits develop. Hence,

Non-violence: Ahimsa

The first *Yama* begins with love. The fundamental divine law that governs life is "Love all". If the idea of hurting anyone or anything remains in the heart, we fail at the first step itself. People who intend to hurt others can easily become demons when they develop capacity, so it is important to love selflessly, unconditionally and joyfully. This is the essence of *ahimsa*. But I feel that there is something more to *ahimsa*. Practiced *ahimsa* may not permit you to hurt, which is fine, but there is a greater need to be compassionate, taking action so that the other is not only not hurt, but out of compassion the other is comforted.

It is a simple matter to understand that liking someone ultimately culminates in love. When we love all, where is the question of being violent or hurting others? When we love, we are ready to sacrifice our comforts, our



always be truthful and nurture the purity within.

When we do hurt others, even unintentionally, guilt often develops, and the removal of guilt is an important aspect of *Yama*. It cannot be done through meditation or cleaning, but can be done through a genuine prayerful state of repentance and letting go at bedtime. This is one important aspect of being truthful – to accept our own failings with humility and genuinely offer them in a prayerful state. It purifies our system of guilty feelings, which are the hardest impressions to remove.

Honesty (not stealing): Asteya

When we have love in the heart and tread the path of truth, honesty then radiates in our existence. Our existence in thought, word and deed will be a manifestation of honesty. Then our very presence will give an impetus to the moral compass of everyone around us. Honesty is the result of a life led with non-violence (*ahimsa*) and nurtured by truth (*satya*). In particular, we have no interest in coveting or stealing anything that belongs to anyone else. At least, minimally, we should not take from others or hurt them. If we could be compassionate and do much more than just not taking and hurting, maybe others would feel more at ease and comforted. Is it enough that we do not snatch away food from the hungry? Surely we can be compassionate enough to ensure that the hungry receive what they need.

Moderation of the senses: Brahmacharya

Brahmacharya has been narrowly understood to mean celibacy, whereas it really means a state of moderation across all our faculties. The term is composed of Brahm + *charya*. ‘*Charya*’

means to dwell, so ‘one who dwells in Brahm’, is aptly called a *brahmacharya*. To pretend to be a *brahmacharya* by imposing rules from outside is like putting the cart before the horse; it is artificial. We achieve moderation as a result of purifying the inner condition through the Heartfulness Way and bringing a state of balance and moderation. When we dwell in that state, all our actions and thoughts naturally have the quality of Brahman.

Such a state of moderation is achieved through the practice of regular meditation on **point A and cleaning of point B** in Heartfulness practice. For such a person, procreation is a natural and sacred act. Procreation is beautiful, as long as our desires do not become a slave to it.

Attitude of non-possessiveness towards worldly things: Aparigraha

The fifth *Yama* is non-possessiveness. It is the culmination of the other four: love, truthfulness, honesty and moderation. We start to exist as if we are in the world but not of the world, like a lotus. It simply means that even if you have something in you, you are not possessed by it or affected by either its presence or its absence. Imagine the arrogance and pride of a *sannyasi* who seems to have renounced all desires and possessions but is proud of his renunciation! He may have renounced, but he possesses a lot of pride and arrogance. He is now possessed! This ego will be fatal. Such an ego will be unproductive and will turn out to be invalid currency in the Higher dimension.

Imagine the emotional gap created by the two different ideas of belonging versus possessing. When one has the sense of belonging, there is pride. When there is a sense of being possessed, there is a tremendous gap! Let us visit the daily

scenario where our mother makes meals for us and serves us with so much love. Now think of the other scenario, where our mother has gone somewhere and we may have to dine out at some friend’s place. We become so grateful to our friend’s mother. Take another scenario: it is raining and you find shelter under the canopy of someone’s roof. You are so grateful to the house owner. Do we express such gratitude towards our mother or our home? Mostly no. Why? Is it because we take them for granted, as we have the sense that they are ours. Possessiveness somehow creates a distance. Belongingness brings us closer.

We naturally develop an awareness of our duties, not in an enforced way but because we put others first as the result of an inner generosity of heart. The natural etiquette of caring and putting others first emerges in our behavior, as our thoughts and actions are no longer based on personal desires. We are no longer pulled by likes and dislikes for people, places or things. We simply live our life with devotion, developing an unattached state naturally and spontaneously. It is not that we are detached but that we love everyone and everything without discrimination, universally. In Heartfulness practice, meditation on point A helps develop this virtue.

These five qualities depend on love. A loving, cheerful and contented heart creates the environment for the blossoming of life itself, without any force or pretense. A spiritual seeker who fulfills the five attributes of *Yama* will not be burdened by egoism. Be it exhibiting miracles or showing off possessions, he or she will not be self-centered, covetous or greedy.

And when do we become so interested in these five qualities that it is a joy to pursue them? When we realize their essential role

in preparing our heart for one purpose only: the purification of consciousness. These five qualities form our spiritual foundation. In fact, no spirituality is possible without them, and they prepare us for better and nobler experiences. Only when we want nothing from anybody, including God, do the doors open.

It is very much like a bank. When you are in dire need of money, banks generally will not help you, whereas when you have absolutely no need of money the bank will solicit your business. Likewise, when God finds a contented soul He gives more. Heavenly gifts descend on those who renounce power itself. If we ask for it, then it is denied. Nature is similar: powers descend automatically on one who says, “I do not need it.”

If you feel daunted by the call of these five vows, I leave you with the lines of the poet H.W. Longfellow, who said,

*Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.*

A Terrible Longing

IN THE HEART

RAMA DEVAGUPTA interviewed PARTHASARATHI RAJAGOPALACHARI on a bright, sunny afternoon in Fremont, California, about the inner search for enlightenment.



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What impulse moves us to search?
What influences our search?

The impulse is a terrible longing in the heart which says, “I must know the truth” – truth in terms of spiritual values. If your material circumstances are too good, too comfortable, too glamorous, they take you away from your search. When you are overprotected, you lose sight of the search. However, if your interest in the search is

burning in your heart, you will eventually break out of it – like the chick breaking out of the shell.

Are there different ways of conducting a spiritual search?

At the beginning, you are guided more by the strength of your inner longing. But that longing may not be intense enough. The confusion between what you are seeking

and what you find can lead you astray unless the inner search is so powerful that it can say, “Not this! Not this!” You may become momentarily trapped into situations which seem to fulfill your search – like drugs, alcohol, even sex. If that fulfills you and you stop there, it means that your seeking was not intense enough, nor was your goal defined. You may stop with sensory or social fulfillment at a particular level, but the longing will lie dormant and something may spark it off again.

When the search is a real search, the flight toward the goal becomes very direct, what we call the *Shuka* path. *Shuka* is the Sanskrit name for the parrot, which flies straight like an arrow – no meandering here and there. The *Shuka* path depends on your strength of purpose, your ability to reject temporary goals, to withstand the temptation to experiment with temporary goals, thinking, “Suppose this is it!” In the true seeker’s path, there isn’t any “suppose this is it!” There may be a pause for a day or two but then you move on, whereas others get lost in a jungle of possibilities for years.

Does the search have a direct relation to the level of attainment of the seeker?

No, no, it only relates to the strength of purpose. The moment you are satisfied with a temporary goal, say, “Stop.” For example, consider the migration of birds. A truly migrating bird flies thousands of miles, often from one continent to another. Many are lost in the ocean, caught in a storm, not able to fly, and fall into the sea. But an

enormous number of them do make it, so, it is possible.

Now, birds have the power of ‘instinct’ to guide them. At the human level, we have the instrument of the intellect, but unless we cultivate wisdom, intellect doesn’t take us anywhere except in the pursuit of material goals – scientific, artistic, commercial, economic – but not spiritual.

Is it necessary to have a teacher?

Yes. A teacher is one who shows the way.

What is the place of practice and technique?

Everything is a practice if it is used in the right way. Even a man who becomes a drinker, thinking that it will fulfill his dream of Nirvana, can benefit from it. If he is able to get out of it quickly, it will have had its place, and it will no longer attract him. If he is satisfied and says, “This is it,” however, he is lost. Your inner fire must tell you what it is and what it is not.

What is the role of spiritual literature and sacred texts?

Spiritual literature gives you intellectual satisfaction, and it is easy to be satisfied intellectually. You may read about something and feel you know what it is, but spiritual values have to be *felt*, not known about. Knowledge of that kind has no place in spiritual life. Many people are easily

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satisfied – they read a lot of literature and say, “I know all about Nirvana. I have read about 68 different varieties of Nirvana in Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Sufism.” The question is: Have they ever *felt* anything?

Is it necessary to be part of a spiritual school?

What is a school? It is something that offers you an education. We have the school called ‘life’, and what you learn in life depends on what you are seeking. So we come back to the seeker: you look for mundane satisfaction, you will find it; you want sensory pleasure, you can find it; you want to become a millionaire, you can become one. Life offers everything.

How does a teacher decide if a seeker is genuine or not?

The teacher must assume that everybody who comes to him or her is a genuine seeker. Time

itself will select the true seeker from the false. Those who are there for fun drop off. Those who are true remain. They may drop off at various stages, depending on their inner fire and how far it will take them.

“Seek and you shall find,” doesn’t mean, “Seek and it shall be found immediately.” When you find it and where you find it depends on the integrity of your search, and the power behind that search. You may discover it just where you are, or you may go around the universe and come back to the place where you started and find it just there. That is why the spiritual search always begins and ends within your self.

So a genuine teacher would accept everybody?

He has to! Because he doesn’t know! I had a vision once, between the waking and sleeping

states. In the vision, I am looking at a packet of seeds in a shop, trying to pick out the good seeds for planting. Then, something tells me, “How do you know that the seed that looks good is going to germinate and the seed that you are throwing away will not?”

So we don’t know the inner life potential that is in the seed: apparently weak, it may be strong on the inside; the other one is apparently strong, but weak on the inside. The Guide lets his students evolve and helps them according to his own ability to do so, at the right time. But the Guide can never judge. He must not judge.

Does the seeker change and evolve in the search?

Naturally. If you put your hand in the fire, will it not get roasted? A spiritual seeker is said to be something like a metal, which is put into the fire to be melted and purified

The spiritual practice of Heartfulness says that you must fly with two wings, like the seagull – the wing of spirituality and the wing of materiality.



so that all the dross is burnt away. Like the purification of gold.

Must one renounce the world to become a seeker?

The spiritual practice of Heartfulness says that you must fly with two wings, like the seagull – the wing of spirituality and the wing of materiality. There is no question of renouncing anything except obstructions to achieving the goal.

When did you become aware that you were a seeker?

I don’t think I was ever a *conscious* seeker. Perhaps it began in a past life. I never looked for a teacher; I *found* him. There must have been some inner preparation, but it seems that I must have wasted several lives searching for what I could have found

in one life. My Guide once told me that I had been associated with him in an earlier life.

The teacher’s task is to continue to teach and help others evolve. He may come life after life, highly achieved, but with a duty to come back to teach us, whereas the seeker comes only to seek and to find. In a sense the teacher’s search is to find seekers – having finished his search himself and found what he sought.

Is finding the teacher the beginning of our journey or is it the end of our quest?

If a bird lays an egg, it has given the possibility of a new life. But it all depends on the bird within the egg – whether it is able to break out of the shell. That final purpose has to come from the chick in the egg, pecking it from inside and breaking the shell to come out.

So there is an element of fulfillment when you find your Guide; it is a big part of your journey. But what is left? My Guide once told a very senior advanced disciple, “Now your journey is very short.” Then he laughingly said, “It may be very long too.” Another disciple who was present with him became puzzled. “How can short become long?” he asked. My Guide replied, “One percent of infinity is still infinity, and if you stumble there, you can go back all the way – to the point where you started.”

What pitfalls might a seeker face?

Everything is a pitfall for the unwary and the faithless. And nothing is a pitfall for the courageous seeker who just shakes it off like a bear.

Having found a spiritual technique, a Guide, and having become established in the practice, how can a seeker assess his progress? What criteria should he use?

A seeker can never assess his own progress. Even my Guide used to say, “What I

am and where I am, only my Guide knows.” This is going back to that Heisenberg principle in physics, “If you know its location, you won’t know its velocity. If you know its velocity then you won’t know its location.” This principle applies much more profoundly and truthfully to spiritual matters.

We are so used to assessing our progress at school or at work.

There it is assessable. But here we cannot. When you fly, you need an altimeter to tell the height. If you are out in space, you need ground control because there is no barometric pressure to tell you the altitude. You are in a vacuum. So you rely on another source. Ground control tracks you, and your obedience must be total. In spiritual matters, the more you grow, the more you rely on your Guide’s wisdom. It is a matter of survival.

Does the spiritual seeker ever reach a stage where he can consider that he has reached the goal?

There is no such thing as a fixed goal in spirituality. It is ever changing. Learn

to love and do not seek love for yourself. Things break down when you want everything for yourself and you are not concerned for others – whether it is an individual, or a country, or the whole world. “I want to be powerful.” “I want to be rich.” “I want to be wealthy”. Where there is ‘I’ there is always destruction.

Never be diverted away from your course by the enticements of life, whether they are material, mental, or even apparently spiritual. The so-called spiritual world is full of enticements. All has to be renounced because spirituality is, ultimately, becoming nothing, where ‘nothingness’ is what matters.

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Eyes of the heart

Benedicte Hervey

A heart full of vacuity
is what meditating on the heart brings to me.

Earlier, my heart was full of the burden of the past, but little by little meditation has freed me and I feel lighter every day. I find myself open to what the present has to offer, open to all those I meet.

When I was young I read poetry, and one sentence awoke in my heart the nostalgia of a forgotten state of being:
I would like to be a simple puddle of water to reflect the sky.

To get back to simplicity and transparency would allow infinity to reflect itself in me. That aspiration was there.

Meditation awoke in me the longing to become a simple and humble being, yet rich with the immensity of the universe.

That spiritual longing is there in every one of us.
The awakened state is not only for the Buddha; it is for every one of us if we let ourselves be fascinated by the beauty of our inner world.

In today’s world we tend to look outside, seeing people in two dimensions: he is happy, she is sad, he is fat, she is thin.
We don’t see the other dimensions, the depth of the person, because this can only be seen with the eyes of the heart.

And if we don’t see our own depth, how can we see depth in anyone else?
By meditating, I regain awareness of my depth and the many other dimensions awaiting me.

As children of our creator, isn’t it possible that we may have inherited a small part of his infinity?



TASTE OF LIFE

Lord, the air smells good today,
straight from the mysteries
within the inner courts of God.
A grace like new clothes thrown
across the garden, free medicine for everybody.
The trees in their prayer, the birds in praise,
the first blue violets kneeling.
Whatever came from Being is caught up in
being, drunkenly
forgetting the way back.
Rumi

Matcha

The story of matcha tea tells how tea drinking became a meditation. TOM MICHAELSEN interviews SANDEH VON TUCHER who runs the Tushita Teahouse in Munich about matcha.

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Matcha tea has become increasingly popular over the past few years. They say it was once the tea of Zen Masters in Japan. Is this true?

Matcha actually comes from China, as does all tea culture. In China, tea was first regarded as a medicinal plant and was pulverized, steeped in hot water and then whisked with a bamboo whisk. But that was from normal, non-shaded tea plants, which had a somewhat bitter, medicinal taste and contained a lot of catechins. Then, in the twelfth century, Zen Master Eisai brought the tea tradition to Japan. He experimented with the tea in his monastery in Kyoto and was the first to draw up a set of rules for the preparation of tea. These rules can already be regarded as the precursors to the Japanese tea ceremony. And the monks took advantage of the effect of the tea to meditate more intensely and for longer periods of time. Through connections between monks, samurai and shoguns, tea spread to other circles of society. But initially, tea drinking was an elite affair, reserved for the wealthy.

Heartfulness



What is the basis of the effect of matcha tea?

In order to improve upon the tea's taste, the tea plants were shaded, which caused more amino acids to be produced, giving the tea a sweeter taste. So initially it was only a question of taste. Only later did it become apparent that these amino acids were responsible for the soothing effect. And it's the combination of amino acids and catechins that make up matcha tea's soul. This harmonious balance of the mixture finally determines the quality and the price of high-grade matcha. The amino acids have the soothing effect and the catechins are simultaneously somewhat stimulating.

Can the benefits offered by match green tea be destroyed by preparing it the wrong way?

Yes, if the water is too hot. This destroys some of the chlorophyll and extracts more catechins from the tea. From the point of view of traditional Chinese medicine, catechins have astringent and 'lowering' properties. But at the same time there are substances in the tea that have quite a

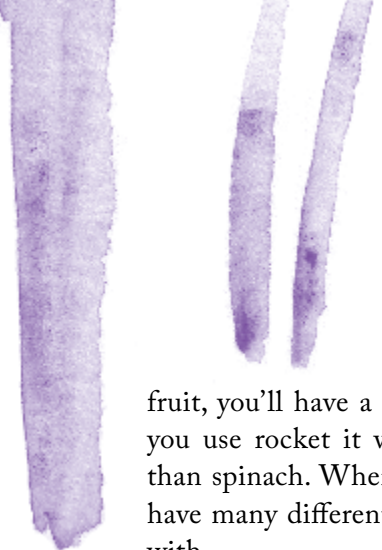
stimulating effect, and what is important is the right balance. Therefore, it is really essential for the water temperature to be at around 70° C or 158° F, and that is also the temperature of the water used in a traditional tea ceremony:

- Pour some hot water into the tea bowl to warm the bowl and the whisk; empty the water after a few minutes.
- Place 2 g matcha green tea powder in the bowl and steep it in 60 ml of hot water at 70°C.
- Press the whisk gently against the bottom of the bowl and whisk, using at first a circular and then a zigzag motion to achieve a frothy brew.

Is it true that certain ingredients in matcha tea are more effective if they do not come into contact with hot water but are used in a smoothie, for example, and not heated at all?

With a smoothie it's like this: there are many effective ingredients you can use, which act in different ways. For example, if you use

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fruit, you'll have a higher fructose content; if you use rocket it will have a different effect than spinach. When you mix a smoothie, you have many different active ingredients to deal with.

Isn't matcha tea's antioxidant activity above all due to the fact that the tea leaf is very finely ground and also that you drink the whole leaf?

Exactly, we drink the whole leaf. And the shading is also important. Good matcha tea is fluorescent green. That's the chlorophyll. What's important is the combination of catechins, chlorophyll and drinking the whole leaf.

Do I really need a bamboo whisk to prepare matcha tea or will an electric milk frother do as well?

Well, it's really quite helpful to use a bamboo whisk. Bamboo whisks are very easy to use and clean. Of course, it's also possible to use an electric milk frother, but it would be kind of a pity. I find that you can't really separate preparing matcha tea from drinking it. And if you take half a minute or a minute to prepare it, then you actually get much more out of it than if you do it with an electric frother. Because you simply feel what kind of condition you're in. If you're feeling strong, you also whisk it forcefully. If you are centered, your froth will be nice. What kind of thoughts are you thinking? There are actually quite a few aspects that come together in this short time it takes to prepare matcha tea. You also give the tea some of your Chi. Which only means

you take this bit of time, you center yourself, you breathe into your belly below your navel, and then you begin to whisk this tea with your body, not just with your wrist, but with your whole body. And the simple fact that you are doing this does something to the tea.

Some people find traditional matcha tea bitter and prefer to drink it with milk, as matcha latte. Does this alter the effect of matcha tea?

It certainly does. Matcha has this 'lowering' and clarifying effect. The fog that sometimes surrounds us is gathered and sinks down. And the milk, especially if it is cow's milk, has great moistening capacity and therefore has an almost contrary effect. You could instead add a plant milk, such as unsweetened almond milk or unsweetened rice or soy milk. These also have a fluid-enhancing quality, but they do not promote mucous formation. Because that's what matcha also does, it can transform fluids that are unclean and expel them. Together with a plant milk would be perfectly all right, but with cow's milk it would really be a pity.

How do you know if it's good matcha?

Matcha is not really a trademarked product, but you can tell by the colour. It all depends on the colour. Of course, we also have different kinds of matcha at Tushita. The matcha we use for smoothies is also green, but of course it is not as green as the matcha I use when I want to drink pure matcha and which I prepare in my Japanese tea bowl. That's much greener.

There are more catechins in the matcha used for smoothies, which contains the coarser leaves that sometimes have been exposed to a bit of sunlight. It simply shows in the

colour, and you can tell by its effect. So, high-grade matcha stimulates the senses and simultaneously soothes the heart. That means that when you meditate, for example, it refreshes your spirit and at the same time your body is nice and relaxed. You can simply observe your thoughts or your breath with good matcha tea, whereas if it's lower grade matcha the system is simply in turmoil. Lower grade matcha doesn't contain as much chlorophyll or as many amino acids, and it contains more catechins, so your system becomes excited and then it is very, very difficult to really observe your mind. Unless you put in a bit of vegetable or something similar, then the calming effect might come about through other substances.

Is there something else we should be aware of?

Perhaps we should take a look at how the matcha has been packaged. And where it was packaged. Was it packaged on site in Japan or was it packaged here in Europe? That also makes a difference, because the extremely finely ground matcha powder is so sensitive. It oxidizes very quickly when it is exposed to air, and especially the chlorophyll is very sensitive. Thus matcha loses Chi very quickly, which means it loses energy and freshness.

How long can you keep an open packet of matcha tea at home?

If you really want to have the matcha tea energy, then about four weeks.

What else is necessary to brew traditional matcha tea?

The right kind of tea-making equipment. There are these wonderful ceramic tea bowls that have to be a little wider at the bottom, so that one can really whisk nicely. There are bowls that are used in winter that are a little taller to hold the warmth better, and a summer bowl with a wider mouth that lets the tea cool more quickly. Then there is the long bamboo spoon used in Japan to measure out the tea – two measures of matcha powder for one cup of tea. The tradition is to first warm the cup with hot water and then dry it again. Water quality is important, too. If you are drinking high-quality matcha, you should use water with low calcium content – it simply tastes better.



on dreams

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and opening doors

CHIARA TOWNLEY explores the depth of meaning that dreams can bring to unlocking the subconscious mind.

It happens to many of us that we wake up restless in the morning after a crazy dream. But what if our dreams are actually delivering important messages to us? Some people say they have prophetic dreams. When we dream during our sleep, we have the power to tap into the subconscious and discover deeper truths about ourselves. How to develop this skill?

After reading *Autobiography of a Yogi* I started to consider the idea of writing a journal to keep track of my dreams. In this book, Yogananda explains that enlightened spiritual beings can steer their dreams in the direction they want. He also mentions that once you are aware of dreaming in your dreams, it means that you are developing spiritually.

After reading this revealing book, I desired to develop an inner connection with my dreams. I was going through some changes in my life – a new city, new house, new professional life – and I wasn't able to find a clear vision of what to do next. I don't remember the setting of one dream, but I do recall that I was wondering about the 'snakes' in my life. I don't think the word was referring necessarily to people; maybe it was referring to the anxious thoughts I was developing in that stressful moment. I repeated the word 'snakes' several times during the dream, and kept on asking the Universe about the meaning of them. Suddenly, the reply came: "Change skin." In the dream, I remember repeating those words several times aloud, and when I woke up I knew that that the Universe had delivered a message to me.

I believe that reading about spirituality and practicing meditation can open the door to enchanting realities hidden behind the veil of the rational world in front of our eyes. Once that door opens even a tiny bit, we have the chance to take spiritual development to the next level. This doesn't mean that the answers to our questions will come through a dream, but that if you stay open and receptive you will find messages everywhere on your path.

After my 'snake' dream I didn't know what to think or how to change my skin, but at least I knew that I had found part of a secret code to communicate with my dreams. After a couple of weeks, during a flight to Europe, I was listening to a podcast by the spiritual leader Tara Brach. She mentioned a metaphor about a snake changing skin – there it was again, the same message in a different form.

I don't know what 'changing skin' means in my life, but I certainly know that the Universe is telling me to change something deep within me. I will keep looking for more clues on my path and push that door until it is wide open. Every one of us has a spiritual path waiting to be discovered, and if we are diligent and consistent in our search I guarantee we can all find it.

to wonder & be surprised

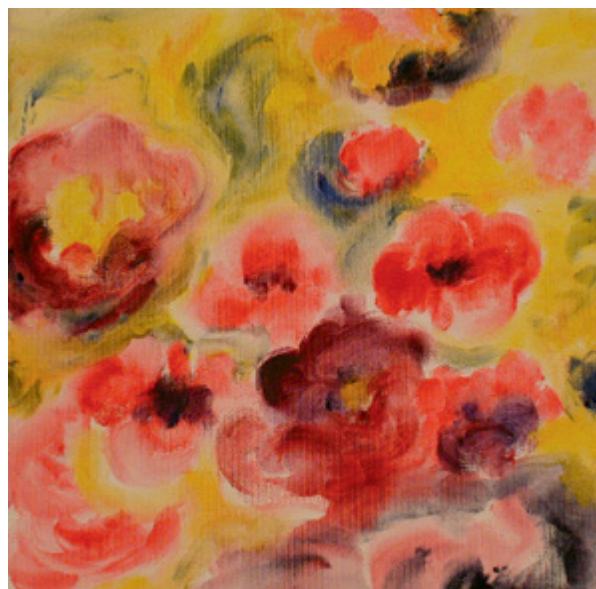
To wonder and be surprised by the wonders of nature. This is the core of my existence.

An art essay by BENTE ELISABETH ENDRESEN

I stood by the Norwegian coast high up north. The weather had been mild, sunny and pleasant, not too cold. The sky was clear blue. We were a little group building an old-style boat, inspired by a Viking ship. In a break, we looked out on the ocean view and the wonderful northern Norwegian landscape with high and impressive mountains surrounded by narrow strips of land. Here humans had survived under harsh living conditions in a cold climate.

Suddenly there was a chilly breeze and clouds of different dark gray-blue tones got closer. Surprisingly quickly the sky grew visibly darker and, before we could withdraw there was a violent storm of thunder and lightning.

I stood completely fascinated, feeling this marvelous power of the elements of nature. It was a demonstration of magnificent energy and variation of colors. The sky was all kinds of blue. Some parts were clear blue sky; others were dark gray-blue turning almost black.



Top. Land of Joy. Let the joy of Creation fill the heart.
Left Flowers. Flowers bring warmth to the heart.
Right Flowers. Joy. What joy it is to watch flowers.

I was completely happy, thankful to be experiencing a spectacular show of nature.

The main inspiration for most of my paintings is the Nordic and Arctic environment. My upbringing in northern Norway and many years in Greenland had such a strong impact on me. I paint the elements – earth, water, air and fire, and the fifth element, the Cosmos.

Closeness to nature has resulted in an everlasting wonder about Creation – from the tiniest seed turning into a perfect tree, to a total fascination with the Cosmos. An ongoing theme of my paintings is Creation, and I am deeply fascinated by the questions that are studied in an attempt to understand more about the Cosmos.

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Living close to the Arctic has led me to raise awareness of the changes in climate we are now experiencing. They are so visible in the Arctic region, where nature is so vulnerable to the disturbances of pollution and temperature change. Glaciers are melting at an alarming rate. Flora and fauna are changing as their living conditions change. The ocean is filled with plastic pollution. Sea birds are found with up to 40% of plastic in their stomach. Whales die from eating plastic. In cooperation with artists and scientists, I have curated exhibitions, concerts, talks and workshops to help people observe and understand the effects of climate change.

I am now in contact with dedicated people concerned with aspects of sustainability, all in many different occupations. We meet regularly to discuss the UN's 17 Pathways to Peace and Justice, and how we can play a positive role in

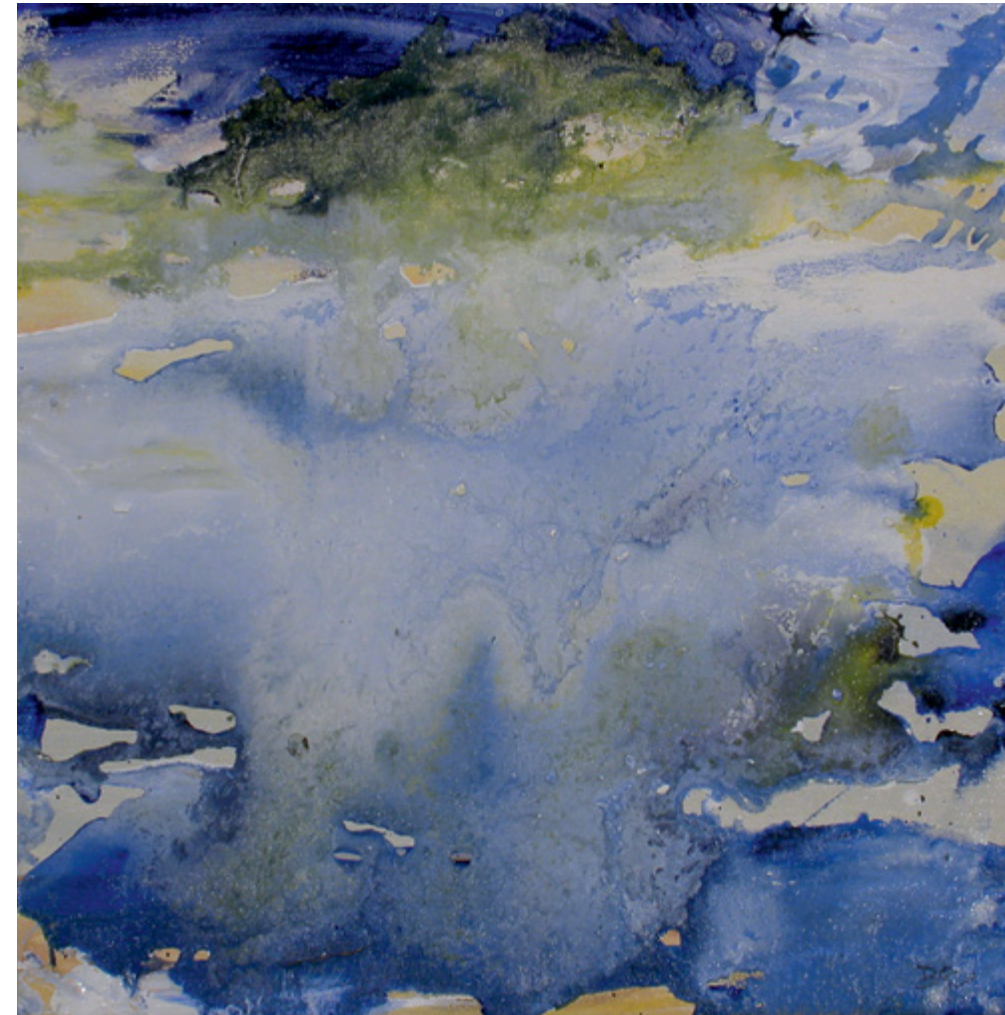
raising awareness and spreading knowledge of solutions. One way is through art.

Along with the outer path of my life, there is an inner path, and when I paint I go into a room of my own, a space where I can be in contact with the paintings coming out of stillness. There are a lot of images waiting to be painted. My part is to be a channel, and not stand in the way for the impulses that come. To encourage these impulses, I meditate, listen to creation music, and read myths that cultivate the atmosphere I want to express in the paintings.

Back in northern Norway in wintertime, I travel inland to a camp where the indigenous Lapp people of the north live.

In the darkness of the 24-hour Arctic winter's night, we set off sledging with reindeer across the snow and ice. The wind can be noisy, but on a clear night the stars shine very brightly, arching across the sky, in absolute silence. We are hoping to see another silent wonder of nature, the Northern Lights – the Aurora Borealis. And the wonder happens. The sky is filled with green light that flits and dances between the silhouetted mountaintops.

Top. Arctic. Arctic is water element in all forms; snow, ice, water, clouds filled with water.
Bottom left. Light in Arctic. The sky in the Arctic is high and clear, and produces a special, uplifting light.
Right. Water element in motion. The fascinating transformation of water in all forms.



compost.

Today I feel wealthy. Knee-deep in richness. Standing in the compost, moving aside the top layer to access loamy, dark material underneath. Over and over, I fill two large buckets, carry them to the garden, pour them over cabbage leaves and carrot fronds. Then back to the bin with empty buckets, do it again. Dig a trench through the rotted, fermented, transformed vegetation, shovel the top level of the compost beside it into the trench, dig again into this body of digested leavings.

Full disclosure: I don't compost the expert way that many do. I don't pay attention to the layers, to the timing, to the turning; these are processes which produce enough heat to cook any weed seeds left in the material, and to transform everything to an incredibly fertile ground.

But every forkful I lift teems with worms, incredibly abundant, chewing on all that vegetable matter, digesting it, and casting it out. If I do the 'proper' compost method, the heat is too much for the worms. They are such amazing little wiggly gardeners, their poop is fantastically fertile and I just really like them in the garden. I just like them period. So my compost doesn't process as well as it could, it still will have weed seeds, but it has a lot of helpful worms and in fact I have a much easier time with the composting process.



My method is to just take stuff – radish leaves and chickweed, parsley stems and dandelions – from the garden to the bin, throw it in, include lots of roots with soil on them, now and then toss a bit around and mix up some of the more processed compost with the less. Thanks to the efforts of worms and digesters like sowbugs, I get rich, fertile ground to support the next round of garden vegetables.

The bin we have is large, built on a hillside and the material gets thrown in on top and is pulled out on the downhill side looking like dark, rich loam. I take it from the bottom in spring and summer, but by autumn, it's time to get right into the bin and move it around methodically and move it out with more gusto and quantity. Hence, today, I'm knee-deep in its richness.

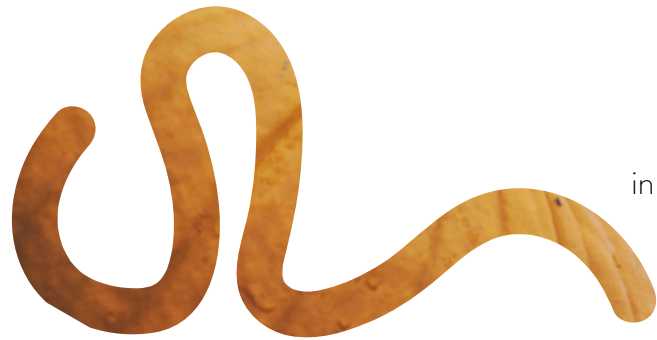
This process has been going on for years. Such a cycle, such wealth. Can you imagine anything more fundamentally rich and profitable than fertile, productive soil?

LESSONS

FROM

THE GARDEN

ALANDA GREENE
on the wealth and continuity of life
in the process of composting, and the power
of death, transformation and rebirth.



Our house was constructed on a hillside that was originally forested. We cleared enough for a garden and home, and the forest soil was depleted, light buff and dusty.

When I began working with a grub hoe to clean out the gravel and stones, there was little left but a hole when I finished. The soil that is now deep, black, full of organic material and very productive was built up year after year. The vegetables grew and the compost grew. For all that is taken out, it seems like more comes back in.

It's like this with a life. It can be. Building up experience, skills, knowledge, wisdom, through years of engaging with work and learning. My teacher repeatedly said, "Work is worship."

Compost is a teeming, living reminder of the power of death, transformation, rebirth.

True confession: I really didn't get this early on, when I was getting going with building a life. So much to do, to learn, to discover. Work often felt like an annoying necessity that got in the way of doing the really good stuff. First Nations teachings include the wisdom: learning takes patience and time. After more time than patience, but having the patience to persevere, learning indeed has come, in ways not anticipated. So I've become a fan of many forms of perseverance and effort.

Lifting another forkful of compost, seeing the lacework of red lines that are worms, finding small, oval and many-legged sowbugs scurrying to escape the disruption, I ask myself: what if worms and bugs quit doing their continual work of breaking down this material into a once-again usable form, better than ever? My part in this is insignificant compared to their transformational magic. I just get the stuff to the bin. A bit later, I'm rich. Rich in fertile compost, rich in hard-working worms and other digesters. What if they decided not to make the effort?

When I first learned about the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva – Creator, Preserver, Destroyer – I was not a big fan of Shiva. The Destroyer felt like the one responsible for my dog being hit by a car and killed, for a friend gone in a car crash,

for so much pain in the lives around me that seemed caused by this destructive force. Why did Shiva have to do that?

Thankfully, my concepts about the destroying power have expanded and deepened and my understanding of Shiva has done the same. What would have happened if my adolescent concepts had not been destroyed for new learning? And of more import, as I stand in this bin of material in various stages of decomposition, what would have happened if all this compost material had not been destroyed and transformed into something else?

Rumi, so long ago, reminded us:

*I died as a mineral and was born as a plant,
I died as a plant and was born as an animal,
I died as an animal and was born as a human,*

....

When have I ever been less by dying?

Compost is a teeming, living reminder of the power of death, transformation, rebirth.

A couple of days ago I listened to a young man who recently returned to school after living two years in a spiritual community. He talked about his own learning, and about how grateful he was that his teachers had themselves gone through a lot of learning

in order to be able to transfer it to others. What he understood now, whether it was yoga or woodwork, was that these teachers had made the effort to acquire knowledge, skill and wisdom in order to teach others. His aim was to give the time needed, the perseverance and effort, in order to be able to pass on his own learning to others.

It's like the compost process: an enrichment over time, a lot gained from growth, and then all of the material becomes transformed into fertile new ground that goes back to the garden to support more growth.

True wealth.



EVOLVING traditions

MEGHANA ANAND explores the intentions behind time-honored traditions and rituals.

BONNE ANNÉE!

FROHES NEUES JAHR!

XĪNNIÁN KUÀILÈ!

SAAL MUBARAK!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Old memories cherished. New resolutions made. It's the start of another year that brings in its tide changes that we may look forward to with hope in our hearts.

Welcoming the New Year is a popular tradition, and a quick search on the Internet will reveal to you the diversity of celebrations all over the world. The origin of this tradition can be traced back to ancient Babylon, and over time different regions and communities adapted it adding new zeal and flavor.

That's how most traditions evolve.

Nobody can make a tradition; it takes a century to make it.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Traditions are probably as old as humans. Today, New Year happens on 1 January, an arbitrary day in the Gregorian calendar with no cosmic significance, but it reflects the need for a renewal of life in the darkest part of the year in the northern hemisphere. The reference to this tradition introduces the concept of the roots of various beliefs and practices that have been handed down from generation to generation. How do these age-old rituals and ceremonies reflect the culture and upbringing of a particular group of people? What was their purpose?

Over time, many traditions and rituals have lost their original meaning. Delving into that significance reveals much about bygone eras and the knowledge of the people who developed them. Keeping the essence alive in present times may radically contribute towards the making of a better tomorrow. As we as a species evolve, so do our beliefs and practices.

Michael Puett and Christine Gross-Loh, in their international bestseller, *The Path*, give a very innovative perspective on the simple activity of playing hide-and-seek with a four-year-old:

"When you play this game – when you crouch with your foot sticking out of a closet door so that she can find you easily, when she laughs with glee upon discovering you, and when you enthusiastically repeat the game with her again and again – you are not just engaging in lighthearted play. The two of you are participating in a ritual by taking on roles that diverge from your usual ones – a ritual that allows you to construct a new reality. "... We tend to think of ritual as something that tells us what to do, not as something transformative."

For the rational human being of today, 'tradition' may be synonymous with superstition. So we need a spirit of inquiry to delve into the original purpose of any tradition. For example, why does a meal in most traditions end with a sweet dish? What is the rationale behind fasting on specific days of the month? Why do people of some cultures bow, some bring their hands together, and some others shake hands with each other as a form of greeting?

Why is the drumbeat an integral part of African rituals? How did the tea-drinking ceremonies evolve in oriental countries? What is the relevance of ancient Indian and Native American rituals in today's times?

The spiritual and scientific purpose behind many of them, if not all, can be quite fascinating. It opens our minds to the benefit of these traditional practices in our daily lives. And not only do they impact our lives as individuals, but they have a broader effect on the society at large. Today many scholars are conducting research in the field of indigenous science, traditional knowledge and the study of nature. Rosalyn R. LaPier, a Research Associate from Harvard University states, "Let us remember that long before western science came to these shores, there were scientists here.... Western science is a powerful approach, but it is not the only one. Indigenous science provides a wealth of knowledge and a powerful alternative paradigm."

Do you have a longstanding tradition or custom followed in your family or community? If you would like to share it with our readers, please write to us at contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

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Heartfulness In the Field

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO



Yoga. It means 'to join'. Its ultimate aim is to unite the self with the universal consciousness. In October I decided to do the Heartfulness Yoga Teachers Training. As soon as I set foot in the Babuji Memorial Ashram Manapakkam in Chennai, it felt like home! The atmosphere at the ashram was one of serenity and tranquility. We were a batch of 38 people from different corners of the world blended together.

Our days began early with Yoga followed by discussions and lessons ranging from the body and mind to the soul. A lot of emphasis was laid on Karma Yoga, learning through

experience and not merely theoretical knowledge and, most importantly, on light-heartedness!

We had group meditation every day with a senior Heartfulness trainer. I can not emphasise enough the benefits of Heartfulness meditation. I have experienced immense transformation in myself. I lost my fears, my anger, my restlessness, my confusion, my worries and all that was unwanted. It has given me a sense of higher purpose and enthused me with the will to make a change in myself.



Heartfulness events are ongoing across the UK and Ireland.

We have made forays into new arenas such as the crown courts in London. In a few other corporate settings, e.g., Peterborough and Bradford, new participants are coming together on a regular basis, to deepen their experience. Groups are also ongoing in hospital settings in Shropshire and West Yorkshire.

A Heartfulness Meditation society has been set up by one of our students at Middlesex University with 160 members. A Heartfulness stall set up during Freshers week attracted a lot of attention and plans for regular events are being put into action and links have been made with the Psychology and Nursing Departments.

Following Freshers week at Derby University, a number of sessions are planned to take place in the Multifaith centre in 2018.

Events in schools are ongoing. In Ireland and Scotland trainers have been invited back into schools, to develop the work already undertaken with the children. A whole primary school experienced Heartfulness in Wales, with plans to develop Heartfulness audios in the Welsh language. The head teacher was very open to us, with a deep concern for the children's emotional well being.

JOIN ONLINE



JANNICKA BASSIS

Join us for a webinar on New Year, New Possibilities: Keeping Resolutions, Aspirations and Inspiration Alive...

Key takeaways:

- Preparation to take action in the New Year.
- Working to overcome stumbling blocks and achieve one's New Year Resolutions.
- Decision making for new aspirations, new resolutions, in career, personal life, goals.
- Tips to keep the inspiration alive.
- Mold your living to achieve your aspirations.
- An experiential session of Heartfulness Relaxation and meditation.

Saturday, 27th January, Saturday, 7 PM IST, 8:30 AM US Eastern Time, 1:30 PM GMT

Register at

<http://webinar.heartfulness.org/new-year-new-possibilities/>

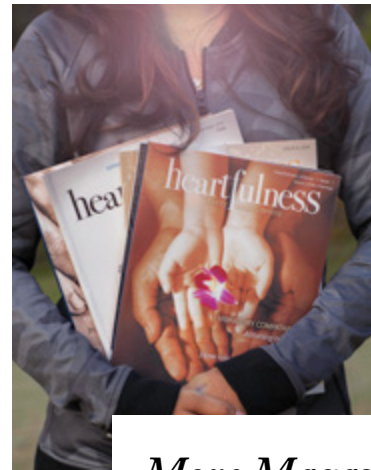
Up

RETREAT



Himalayan Retreat

Have a rejuvenating spiritual retreat with your friends and family at Satkhol – our beautiful ashram in the Himalayas. We extend our wholehearted invitation to you for a unique experience in the quietude of our ashram environment while you take in the beauty and serenity of the snow-capped and majestic Himalayas. We look forward to welcoming you at the Babuji Nilayam, your home during your stay in Satkhol. —> www.sahajmarg.org/smww/satkhol/



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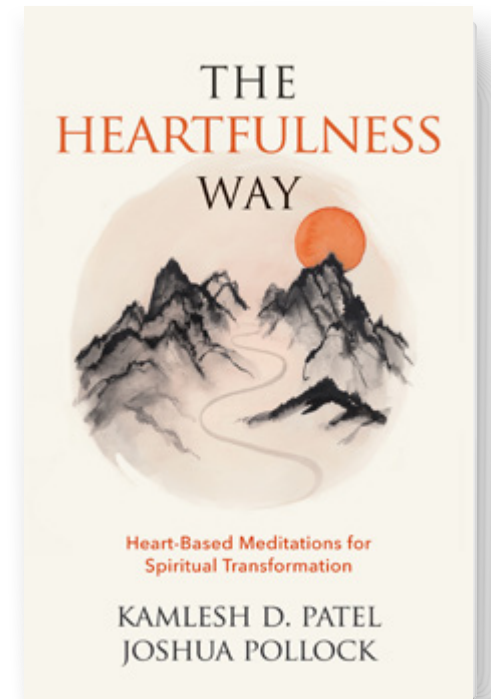
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HAPPY READING

The Heartfulness Way

In this uncommon text, you will discover a special collection of meditations and an exceedingly rare feature known as yogic transmission. Together, they awaken the depths of human potential and initiate a mystical inner journey. In this process, the heart becomes a perennial source of wisdom and guidance to help you navigate life's twists and turns and lead a life more connected to yourself and others.

—> www.theheartfulnessway.com



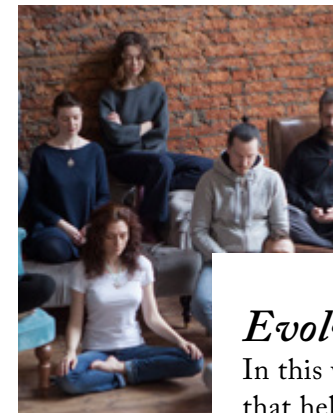
MASTERING BEING



3 masterclasses

Learn The Heartfulness Way in 3 free meditation masterclasses taught by our global guide, Daaji. In these online masterclasses, Daaji will teach you the practical benefits of daily meditation. Masterclasses will be available online each day after you sign up and accessible throughout the day. Each class runs between 35 and 45 minutes. —> <http://en.heartfulness.org/masterclass>

STUDY UP



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In this video series, you'll learn tools that help you live a happy and fulfilling life: Meditation and the Evolution of Consciousness - A Heartfulness and Udemy Video Series. Register today.

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