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The Inner
Journey from
Seeker to Finder:
A New Year's
Invitation
DAAJI

The Sacred
Necessity of
Presence
NEGIN M.
KHORASANI

Do Spiritual
Seekers Have
More Stress?
VICTOR KANNAN





The Inner
Journey



Presenting a wonderful life journey written by Dr. Ichak K. Adizes

Seeing every challenge as an opportunity for growth, Dr. Ichak Adizes moved beyond a childhood marked by imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp and immigration to an unfamiliar country to discover the benefits of opening his heart.

Dr. Adizes's personal story is more than a string of external events that propelled him through adversity after adversity to become the insightful, compassionate person he is today. It is also a map of his journey into a heart which, like the accordion that he played to earn a living and put himself through school, ultimately expanded and opened up to the universal truths that connect us all in our humanity.

The Accordion Player is a compelling account of a remarkable life — an unvarnished view of a man whose decision to recognize the value of change and creative conflict allowed him to love. His story reveals the enduring human ability to turn possibility into reality.

Foreword by Daaji

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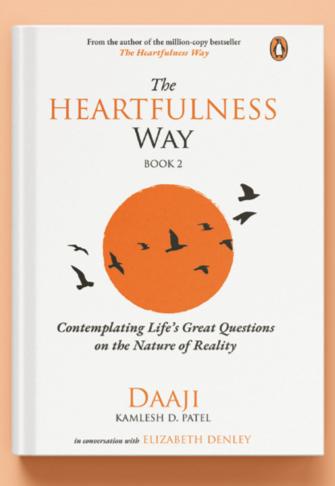
NEW RELEASE

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The Heartfulness Way

The HEARTFULNESS WAY, BOOK 2

Contemplating Life's Great Questions on the Nature of Reality



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Daaji, Author, Global Guide of Heartfulness



Elizabeth Denley

Author,

Spiritual Trainer in

Heartfulness

In *The Heartfulness Way*, Book 2, Daaji continues with the conversational format that he used so effectively in the previous volume, this time with Elizabeth Denley. Daaji takes us through the journey of expanding consciousness to the ultimate realization of the purpose of human life.

Essentially, *The Heartfulness Way*, Book 2 is a guidebook for any of us wishing to transform from our current state, with all our beliefs, limitations, fears and weaknesses, in order to realize happiness, balance and our full potential in this very lifetime.

Daaji outlines the approach required, which is clear and practical, maps out the journey and provides the practices and tools needed. He sheds light on the obstacles and the solutions to help us overcome them. His approach is simple and experiential and can be practiced by anyone with interest and willingness while working and living a normal family life.

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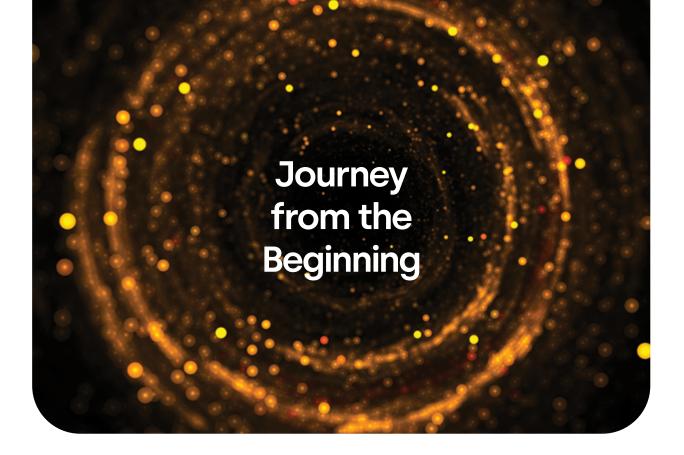
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Dear readers,

This month, we trace journeys to their origins. A seven-year-old girl writes a poem for trees. A former East German artist recalls cutting up newspapers under surveillance, birthing an art form from political constraint. A daughter sits with her ill mother, discovering what presence truly means. Ancient herbs mentioned in the *Ramayana* sprout on modern hillsides. Each beginning shapes everything that follows.

In this issue, Daaji explores how the inner journey transforms a seeker into a finder, offering a New Year's invitation to move from effortful climbing to restful discovery. Dr. Ananthaneni Sreenath traces *Sanjeevini*, the mythical life-restoring herb, from epic poetry to rocky outcrops near Kanha Sarovar. Seven-year-old Mayanshi Parthasarathi offers her first published poem, a promise to protect trees. Artist Karla Sachse shares how political restrictions in East Berlin led her from canvas to paper, creating woven vessels from newspapers that hold people's stories and secrets. Victor Kannan explores why spiritual practice intensifies stress before bringing peace. Ruby Carmen presents Zen's three-step process and the empty cup that must precede discovery. Negin M. Khorasani discovers authentic relating as she accompanies her mother through illness. Dr. Jayaram Thimmapuram discusses the science of sleep and practical habits for better rest. Alanda Greene learns equanimity from ducks avoiding conflict. Ichak Adizes shows how every solution births new problems, making leadership itself a continuous beginning.

Next month, we explore "Discovery." We welcome your submissions at contributions@ heartfulnessmagazine.com.

Happy reading! The editors

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Negin is a social entrepreneur and activist, who is committed to inner change. She is also a writer, a dreamer, a consciousness and communication coach, and an educator. She has been meditating for a long time, and rejoices in supporting others to get in touch with their inner being.



KARLA SACHSE

Karla Sachse is an artist based in Berlin and Herzfelde whose practice spans visual poetry, language-based installations, and memorial works in public spaces. Emerging from the Mail Art movement, she leads collaborative projects with Womanifesto and has exhibited at Documenta 15 and the Sharjah Biennial.



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Vanessa is a Heartfulness practitioner, a Heartful Communication facilitator, and an editor of Heartfulness Magazine. She lives in Baroda, India, where she has worked with schools and educators to bring dynamic English language programs to children of all ages.



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Alanda Greene lives in the Purcell Mountains of British Columbia, Canada. Having a deep connection with nature, she and her husband built their house of stone and timber and a terraced garden, and integrated their life into this rural community. Alanda's primary focus is the conscious integration of spirit with all aspects of life.



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Ruby is a Heartfulness trainer, tutor, mentor, and sometimes writer. She has an M.Ed. in Education and Psychology from the University of Cambridge, and has worked in community and mental health. She is passionate about volunteering, service, meditation, languages, and finding beauty in the world around her.



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MAYANSHI PARTHASARATHI

Mayanshi Parthasarathi is a sevenyear-old author and award-winning artist. She is the author of the global best-selling book *Exploring the Universe* and a recognized member of Lean SpaceTech Europe. She is a Top 4 Finalist for Emerging Leader of the Year (Under 12) at the Women Changing the World Awards – Asia Region. Her interests include space, stories, and ancient mythology.

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self-care

"Your work is to discover your world and then with all your heart give yourself to it."

THE BUDDHA

The Science of Sleep

DR. JAYARAM THIMMAPURAM speaks with GAYATHRI K about the science of sleep, its impact on our well-being, and practical habits to support better rest.

Q: Dr. Jay, could you please explain what sleep is and the various stages it involves? Please also highlight why each of these stages is crucial for our overall health and well-being.

Thank you so much for your questions. Sleep is a topic that is very dear to my heart and something I enjoy. If given the option to do anything at all, I would probably get a little more sleep.

Looking at what sleep is, it's a temporary, reversible pause. It is a state where wakeful awareness is temporarily suspended. We may have a different kind of awareness during sleep, but at least the wakeful awareness, especially of the surroundings, is paused.

Sleep is also a state of recuperation and rejuvenation for the body, the mind, and all its cells. Whatever chores need to be taken care of, sleep is when the cells get to do them. So sleep

is one of the most wonderful gifts of nature. If we utilize that gift properly, it contributes significantly to our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Coming to the stages of sleep, if you observe anyone falling asleep with their eyes closed, you will see that their eyeballs start to move slowly from side to side. This goes on for some time, and then they begin to move fast. This phenomenon occurs in repeating cycles and continues throughout sleep.

If we have the opportunity to observe their brain waves, we can see distinct patterns that each individual goes through during the sleep cycle. In the initial phase, the brain is a little relaxed. It further relaxes into what we call stage one sleep, where you have theta brain waves. In stage two, we have theta waves with K-complexes. Stage three is one of the deepest stages of sleep, and we



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have delta waves. Progressively, the waves tend to slow down. Delta waves are the slowest of the waveforms.

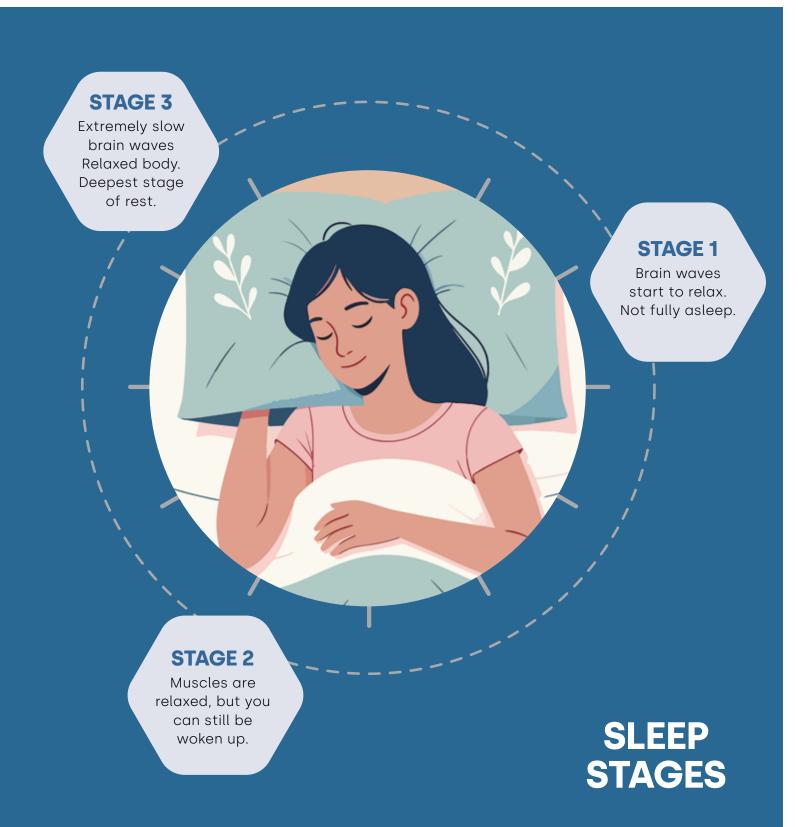
Once we cross these three stages of sleep, we enter another state where we start to have dreams. We call it the REM (rapid eye movement) stage. The first three stages are when our eyeballs move slowly or in non-rapid eye movement. Later, when we dream, the eye movement is rapid.

Each stage has a role to play. Stage one is when the brain waves start to relax a little bit, but we are not fully asleep. It is easy to wake us up. In stage two, your muscles are relaxed, but you can still be woken up, though it may not be as easy as stage one. Stage three is characterized by extremely slow brain waves and a very relaxed body. It is probably the deepest stage of rest that we can get.

In that deepest state of rest, our immune system gets stronger, and our growth happens. Anything related to the repair of the body is done during stage three sleep, the deepest stage of sleep. Moving on to the dream stage, many theories have been put forward about why we dream. However, we do know that this phase plays a vital role in emotional processing. Taken together, these stages of sleep play a crucial role in our health and well-being.

Q: In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of people reporting difficulties with insomnia. What do you believe are the key factors contributing to this rise?

To me, the majority of the cases of insomnia are acquired and are related to lifestyle. We need to understand that, as babies, we didn't have any sleep issues. As kids, we didn't have any sleep issues. As teenagers, we start to realize that we have some control over sleep, and we try to use it,



spending time on activities that may or may not be necessary, compromising sleep.

When we start compromising sleep consistently, when we try not to use nature's gift, there comes a time when we cannot repay it. Sleep debt is not something we can easily pay back. For each night of sleep that you lose, it usually takes at least two nights to recover. So if we look at it that way—the compromise on sleep that we carry over many years and probably decades—the body can take care of only so much. Once it crosses a limit, it becomes very difficult for the body to cope. That's when we start to see the manifestation of sleep problems. Other conditions may be genetic, and addressing those issues is very difficult.

From a lifestyle point of view, if we can establish good sleep hygiene from a young age and understand the benefits of sleep from an early age, when our minds are still open to good things, we can largely address sleep problems.

In that deepest state of rest, our immune system gets stronger, and our growth happens.

Anything related to the repair of the body is done during stage three sleep, the deepest stage of sleep.

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If we look at the prevalence of insomnia, it is definitely on the rise. At least one-third of people have some form of sleep issue. If we can improve one aspect of our lives that will have a positive effect on everything else, it is sleep. You improve your sleep, and it will have a positive ripple effect on every aspect of your life, whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.

Q: Given your demanding profession as a doctor, do you find it challenging to get enough sleep?

Yes, especially when we have so many stresses and strains that we go through in our day-to-day lives. There are so many anxieties we all go through, and these worries affect sleep. It is almost as if the computer program keeps running in the background even when we are sleeping.

It somehow prevents us from getting that deep, restful state. To me, unless we let go of the anxieties and worries before we go to sleep, they will continue to affect our sleep. Most healthcare professionals are prone to sleep issues. In a study we conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, around nine out of ten healthcare professionals had sleep issues.

Q: How do you manage anxieties and worries? Would you be willing to share any strategies or tips that could help other healthcare professionals who may be struggling with similar feelings of anxiety or grief?

All of us go through emotional issues, emotional turbulences during the daytime. These emotional issues—let us consider them as emotional files. Some of these emotional files we process, and some we do not. We push them under the carpet, and we go to bed.

When we go to bed and sleep, it is almost as if there is an office assistant within each of us. This office assistant goes through all these files and says, "You have processed this file, you have processed this file. You have not processed this file—what do you want to do with it?" You wake up, you don't know what woke you up, and you cannot fall back asleep.

One practice that has helped quite a lot, not only for me but also for my colleagues when we use it, is Heartfulness. While meditative practices such as Heartfulness show significant benefits for participants, there are other factors one should be cognizant of.

If we can improve one aspect of our lives that will have a positive effect on everything else, it is sleep. You improve your sleep, and it will have a positive ripple effect on every aspect of your life, whether physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.









HERBAL TEA

REGIMEN OF DAY EASY READING







COOL AND DARK ROOM

EVENING WALKS

BEDTIME ROUTINE

For example, sleep hygiene stands as a foundation. Going to bed and waking up at fixed times should form the framework. This includes the weekends. It should form the base on which everything else rests. If we do not have a good sleep cycle and good sleep hygiene, no matter what we do, it is going to be very difficult to improve our sleep quality.

The second thing that can help one fall asleep and stay asleep is that the core body temperature has to drop by at least one or two degrees. So, keeping the room a little cooler is helpful.

Staying away from electronics is a significant challenge, but necessary. Somehow, we have to do it because electronic equipment influences our brains. The sensory stimuli we get from electronics stimulate our brains, making it

difficult to unwind. If we cannot unwind, it is very difficult to fall asleep.

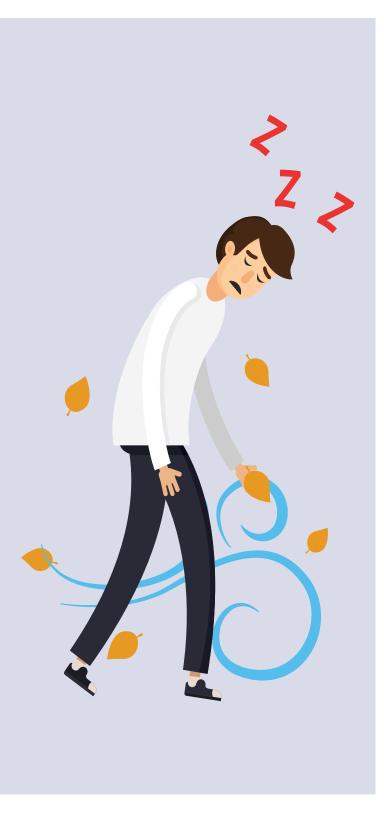
There was a study looking at the onset of sleep when using electronic equipment, especially phones, which delays the onset of stage three sleep by one hour. If it delays stage three sleep by one hour, imagine the quality of sleep that you would get. It is not going to be great.

These are simple tips one can try to improve sleep. In addition to the above, the Heartfulness practices we have used with our participants have also led to significant improvements in their sleep patterns—especially the practice of cleaning, or letting go of the stresses and strains of the day.

Before going to bed, scanning the day and identifying areas where we can improve,

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acknowledging that these are the areas I need to work on, can help us fall asleep and stay asleep. Because when we do that, we are sending a signal to the "office assistant." This office assistant knows that we are aware of the areas we need to work on, and perhaps allows us to have a good night's sleep. Please make sure you work on the areas you need to improve for the office assistant to trust you.

Q: Those tips were incredibly insightful! How do you think sleep deprivation impacts our daily relationships and family dynamics?

Sleep deprivation profoundly affects our emotional state. It can affect how we interact with our friends and family members. Sleep deprivation can lead to irritability. It's a matter of common observation.

Imagine a night when you have slept well: you are a better person, and you interact well. Take a night when you have not slept well: people don't want to come near you; they want to run away

Sleep deprivation profoundly affects our emotional state. It can affect how we interact with our friends and family members. Sleep deprivation can lead to irritability. It's a matter of common observation.

from you. If you want a good relationship, you need that rest. Rest for the mind is extremely important for maintaining a good relationship—not only with others but also with yourself.

Q: Please share your research findings on how Heartfulness meditation helps improve sleep.

In our hospital, we studied the effect of Heartfulness practices on patients who have insomnia. If you look at these patients or talk to them, one thing you realize is that there is a lot of fatigue. You notice a lot of exhaustion in these patients. There are many side effects of sleep deprivation, including heart problems. Even our lifespan is shortened if we can't sleep very well.

So we took these patients with chronic insomnia and we offered simple practices of Heartfulness for eight weeks. We measured their insomnia scores at the beginning and the end of the study. It's called the Insomnia Severity Index score. When we offered these practices for eight weeks, we saw a significant reduction in their insomnia scores from a mean of 20.9 to 10.4—more than a ten-point drop.

A lot of these patients reported something very interesting. They said, "Dr. Jay, we were only able to sleep for four hours before. Now we can sleep for seven hours, eight hours. Our dreams have come back." As their sleep depth and quality improved, they began processing their dreams more effectively.

Q: That is wonderful. We know that getting better sleep and rest helps us work better and be more active during the day. So if you see it the other way, what we do during the day, will it influence our night? Do we need to make lifestyle changes to improve our sleep?

Yes. Absolutely, whatever we do during the day will affect us at night. Physical activity is very important. Starting your day with some physical activity and exposing yourself to the sun early in the morning can help reset your circadian rhythm.

Dietary habits play a role. The timing of our food has a role. The nature of the food that we eat has a role. Our emotional state has a role. Our mental activity during the day has a role. Whatever happens during the daytime influences the nature and quality of sleep we get at night.

It is important to plan our day in a structured way. Bring some structure to your day around which the rest of your activities happen. Set a fixed time to wake up. Have a fixed bedtime. Have time for breakfast. Have time for lunch and have time for dinner.

Do not have your dinner too close to bedtime. Do not exercise too close to bedtime; it will affect your sleep. With exercise, our core body temperature increases, and it takes time for it to go down. Washing your hands, washing your feet, or taking a shower before bed can improve your sleep. As the water evaporates, it removes heat, and the core body temperature drops. That can also improve your sleep.

In the end, the way we live our day is the way we prepare for our night, and the quality of that night colors everything that follows.

Finding Peace

ALANDA GREENE reflects on how peace begins within, drawing lessons from irritable ducks, daily provocations, and the steady support of spiritual practice.

n a hot summer day, waiting at the ferry landing, I sought respite in the shade under the boat ramp. Ducks had made the same choice. Several settled on the sand, curled their heads onto their back and slept. One cranky duck, hissing and snapping, waddled into their midst. One by one, the sleepers rose and moved a few steps away from the irritant, settling and quickly dozing again. Cranky Duck kept going, disturbing their rest, forcing them to move. Repeatedly, the ducks rose, moved, and returned to sleep. Finally, Cranky gave up and also dozed.

It evoked a familiar, anonymous quote: *Peace comes not from the absence of conflict but the ability to cope with it.* Those ducks understood this wisdom.

Globally, peace is shattered with violence and war, deprivation and catastrophe. How can it be attained in such circumstances?

In my teaching days, we often sang a piece called "World Without War." Each verse concluded that there might be hope for us to

make a world with no war. The song expressed how choosing thoughts, words, and actions that do not enflame anger, violence, or resentment can support the hope of a peaceful world. One student protested the lyrics. "There's nothing we can do to get rid of war in the world," he said.

"You can get rid of it in your own world," I offered. The ducks' world stayed relatively peaceful because they didn't react to Cranky.

I'm not always as wise as the ducks in situations that feel provocative, unjust, unfair, or unkind.

Sometimes it takes a long time to regain equanimity. But knowing that peace is possible, knowing I have tools to bring me back, gives me choice.

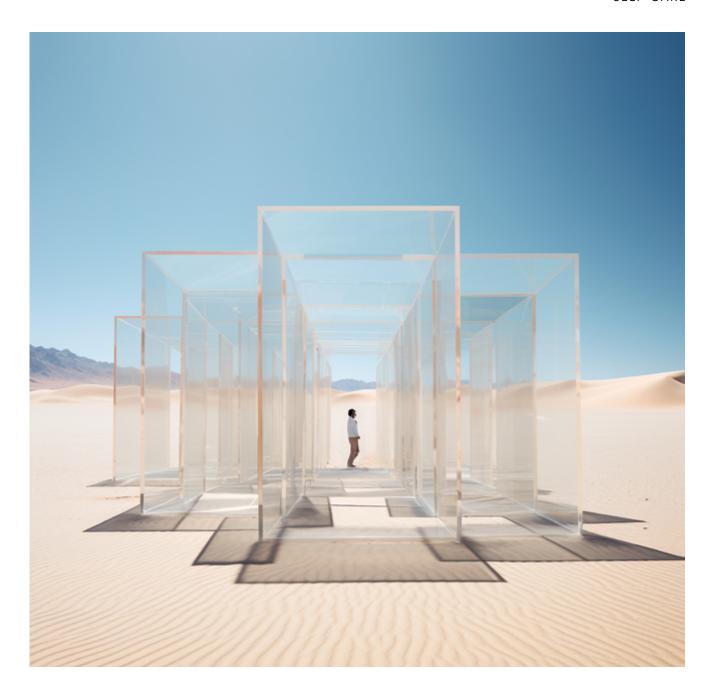
Still, I sometimes resist. There's a twisted kind of satisfaction in being a grump, or feeling self-righteous, or feeling that a severe response is the only reasonable one I can make.

Yet great peacemakers of our time—Gandhi, Dag Hammarskjold, James O'Dea, thousands of Tibetans facing the violence of invading Chinese soldiers—demonstrated that peace, first, is an inside job. From peace within, outer actions to create it can be effective, rather than perpetuating violence and disharmony.

Spiritual traditions worldwide offer ways to find peace within, tools and practices that provide the knowledge and experience of that inner condition. Meditation, breath techniques, reflection, body movements, and the repetition of sacred phrases are among them.

The promise that peace is an inside job is always available to experience. From a place of inner peace, there can be hope that the violence so endemic in our current world can be like a seed, growing peace elsewhere. Holding to peace supports its manifestation outwardly.

Because in the end, Cranky gave up and went to sleep with the other ducks.



The promise that peace is an inside job is always available to experience. From a place of inner peace, there can be hope that the violence so endemic in our current world can be like a seed, growing peace elsewhere. Holding to peace supports its manifestation outwardly.

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"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Inner Journey from Seeker to Finder: A New Year's Invitation

DAAJI explores how the inner journey transforms a seeker into a finder, offering a New Year's call to turn inward and rediscover the infinite within.

mountain climber once told me something I have never forgotten. He said that the most dangerous moment on any peak is not when you are struggling upward, gasping for breath in thin air. It is when you stop, look back at how far you have come, and decide that is far enough.

As we stand at the threshold of another new year, I want to share with you a different kind of journey. Not the familiar resolutions about fitness or finances, but an invitation to the most extraordinary adventure available to a human being: the journey inward toward your own center.

The Starting Point

Every journey begins somewhere. For most of us, that "somewhere" is a sense of restlessness, a feeling that there must be more to life than what we currently experience. Perhaps you have felt it during a moment of unexpected stillness, or in the gap between one thought and the next. This restlessness is not a problem to be solved; it is a call to be answered.

My own Master, Babuji Maharaj, wrote beautifully about this. He said that the soul yearns to be free from bondage. What is this bondage? It is not chains or prison walls. It is the accumulation of coverings, layer upon layer,

which have gathered over time around our innermost being. Some are pleasant coverings in which we have wrapped ourselves willingly. Others are dense and heavy, accumulated through hurt, disappointment, or the simple weight of unconscious living. Either way, they obscure the radiance within.

The inner journey is a process of removing these coverings, one by one, until the soul shines through unobstructed.

Three Ways to Understand the Path

Let me offer you three ways to understand this journey, each illuminating a different facet of the same truth.

The Climb

The first is the image of climbing. Imagine you live in a valley, surrounded by mountains. The valley is comfortable. You know every path, every tree, every stream. But sometimes, when the clouds part, you catch a glimpse of distant peaks bathed in light, and something stirs within you.

The spiritual journey is like ascending from this valley toward

those peaks. In Heartfulness, we speak of moving from the Heart Region through the Mind Region toward the Central Region. These are not physical places but states of consciousness, each more refined than the last. As you climb, something remarkable happens. The air grows thinner, yes, but also clearer. What appeared solid and defined in the valley reveals itself as mist. What you thought you knew gives way to actual experience.

The climb requires effort, indeed. But more than effort, it requires a willingness to leave behind what no longer serves your noble purpose. You cannot carry all your valley possessions to the summit.

Some things must be set down along the way.

The Unfolding

The second way to understand the journey is through the image of unfolding. Think of a flower that opens petal by petal to the morning sun. It does not struggle or strain. It simply responds to the light with its whole being, and in that response, it becomes what it was always meant to be.

Within our spiritual anatomy, there are centers of energy, called chakras, that unfold in just this way. Each center has its own quality, its own gift. The first brings acceptance—the second, peace. Then love, courage, and

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INSPIRATION

clarity. As these centers open, we do not become someone different. We become more fully ourselves, expressing qualities that were always present but dormant, like seeds waiting for spring.

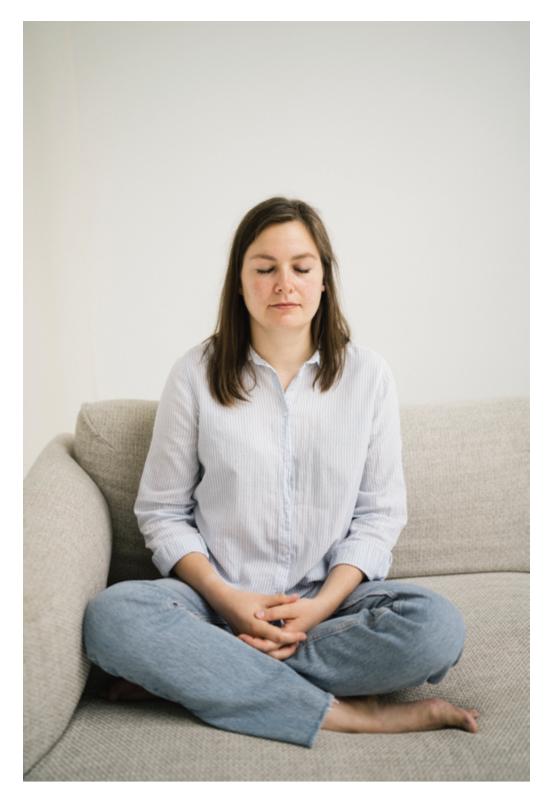
This unfolding cannot be forced. But it is invited through practice, stillness, and most importantly, through the catalytic presence of a guide who has walked the path before you.

The Transformation

The third way is perhaps the most personal: the journey from seeker to finder.

This process begins with curiosity. You hear about meditation, or someone mentions Heartfulness. Something resonates, though you cannot say precisely why. You are a curious participant, testing the waters.

Soon, you begin to notice changes: a greater sense of calm, a softening of old resentments, moments of unexpected joy. The practice is working. Now you are no longer merely curious but genuinely interested. You begin to recognize that these changes are not accidental. There is an intelligence behind them, an unseen hand at work. This recognition of the Guide, the spiritual alchemist behind your transformation, marks a turning point.



From here, the journey deepens. Devotion naturally arises, not as an obligation but as gratitude. You find yourself drawn to practice, not because you "should," but because you want to. The changes continue, becoming more subtle and profound, until one day you notice something extraordinary: you are no longer changing. You have arrived at a state that is changeless, stable, unshakeable.

But even this is not the end. A master of real caliber will take you beyond this becoming, into territories where words fail and only experience speaks.

The Resolution That Matters

As we approach another new year, I would like to suggest a resolution that is different from the usual ones. Most resolutions are about doing more or doing less. I invite you to resolve to go deeper.

Not deeper into complexity, but deeper into simplicity. Not deeper into acquisition, but deeper into release. Not deeper into the noise of the world, but deeper into the stillness at your own center.

This resolution does not require willpower or discipline in the way we usually think of them. It requires only willingness.
Willingness to sit each morning in

meditation. Willingness to cleanse each evening the impressions of the day. Willingness to connect, through prayer, with something greater than yourself.

These simple practices, offered with sincerity, will carry you further than you can imagine. They are the starting push that sets the journey in motion.

The Unfinished Symphony

There is a curious truth about the inner journey: it is never finished, yet every moment can be complete. Each step is both a destination and a doorway. Each insight is both an answer and a new question.

This is not frustrating but liberating. It means there is always more to discover, more to become, and more to experience. The journey itself is the joy. The climbing itself is the summit.

So, as you set your intentions for the coming year, I ask you to consider: What if your resolution were not to achieve something, but to discover something? What if, instead of adding another task to your list, you committed to subtracting the coverings that obscure your true nature?

What if, in this new year, you began the journey inward?

There is a curious truth about the inner journey: it is never finished, yet every moment can be complete. Each step is both a destination and a doorway. Each insight is both an answer and a new question.

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The journey awaits. And I promise you this: what lies within you, at the very center of your being, is worth every step of the climb.

An Invitation

The mountain is there. The path exists. Guides stand ready to help you find your way. All that remains is your first step.

That first step might be as simple as sitting quietly for twenty minutes tomorrow morning, turning your attention gently toward your heart, and allowing yourself to be carried by meditation into the depths of your own being.

Or it might be reaching out to learn more about Heartfulness practices and connecting with a

Heartfulness

trainer who can introduce you to transmission, that remarkable yogic principle that accelerates inner transformation in ways selfeffort alone cannot.

However you begin, begin. The journey awaits. And I promise you this: what lies within you, at the very center of your being, is worth every step of the climb.

May this new year be the year you turn inward and discover the infinite within.

With love, Daaji





"My wish is that this series can help you lead a life guided by the heart. Let's embark on this journey together, you won't regret"

- Daaii

Experience 10 immersive episodes where Daaji takes you through simple exercises and practices to find our way amidst the complex network of thoughts, feelings and emotions and external chaos of daily life... Each session of this series is an invitation to the journey inward — to find calm in chaos, heal and deepen relationships, let go of what no longer serves, and rediscover balance and courage. Together, we learn to transform anger into growth, loneliness into connection, and effort into ease — nurturing collective well-being and awakening our highest potential. This series is a heartfelt guide to living with clarity, compassion, and purpose — to lead a truly heartful life in a hectic world.





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AllZenNow

RUBY CARMEN explores Zen as a path of meditation, breath awareness, and "empty cup" openness, inviting us to meet the mind in a new way.

he word "Zen" has entered the vernacular; it has seeped into everyday life without a full understanding of what "Zen" is.

In everyday speech, "Zen" has come to mean a feeling of peace and relaxation, even a state of "coolness" and a "laid-back" approach to life.

Zen is a form of sitting meditation and derives from the Chinese word *Chán*. While Zen can be understood as a form of Buddhism, it places a strong emphasis on meditation and on perfection—meaning the perfection of the person, of one's own self.

Gateless Gate

Zen is defined as a way of life rather than an ideology, and this is true of many spiritual paths and systems. It has no fixed doctrines or dogmas and little emphasis on written teaching, which has given it strong appeal for many who feel disenchanted with organized religion.

To practice Zen, it helps to understand its three-step process: the body, the breath, and the mind. The method is sometimes described with the Zen term practice-realization, emphasizing the need for practice rather than reliance on words and letters—what we would call theory or philosophy.

INSPIRATION

Regarding the body element, the practitioner needs to adjust the body for meditation, which means maintaining a proper diet, engaging in physical exercise, and avoiding habits that would negatively impact the body-mind connection. In Zen, the optimal meditation posture is the lotus or half-lotus position.

Concerning the breath element, there is an exercise of counting one's breaths. The purpose of this breathing exercise is to refresh the body and mind, infusing the mind-body with energy and releasing toxins and negative energy. During this process, the mind may wander—this is often what happens to all of us who begin a meditation practice. Current concerns, fears, worries, and memories may arise during this process, and this is accepted as a feature of a wandering mind. We could ask if there is any other kind of mind! Different methods and paths offer the meditator a focus, an anchor, an object upon which to rest the mind.

In Zen, it is suggested that counting the breaths helps us train the unconscious mind and supports the training, or taming, of emotions. Many paths and traditions have emphasized the relationship between the breath and a person's emotional state. For example, we can compare our breathing when we are in a peaceful state to when we are furiously angry!

Mind and no-mind

Now, we come to the mind element. What to say of the mind? How can we use the mind to adjust the mind? A Zen practitioner prepares their mind for meditation, consciously moving into that meditative state or condition. Again, how? There is a conscious disengagement with the daily concerns of life. The posture and the breathing, this counting of the breaths helps with this, as there is only the breath. Meditation trains us to come face-to-face with ourselves. In doing so, it trains us to be "with" our own self. It creates a form of psychological stillness, even isolation, to offer an inner environment for this selfstudy or introspection. Through

The purpose of this breathing exercise is to refresh the body and mind, infusing the mind-body with energy and releasing toxins and negative energy.

meditation, we have a window of opportunity to enter the world of the inner psyche. Again, in meditation, we are invited to learn the art of becoming an observer—the canvas of the mind with all the colors, including ideas, desires, and prejudices, may appear on the surface of the mind. We learn to observe them, without becoming involved in them or over-identifying with them. As the level of consciousness changes, the power of the ego is reduced; in essence, the ego becomes weaker.

In Zen, through years of practice and meditation, a practitioner can reach a state of "no-mind" in which they transcend the duality of the mind. In other meditative traditions, it is also referred to as "nothingness" or "zero," or, in Heartfulness, as the "Center." Some explanation of the "no-mind state might be needed here. What it means is that the mind is no longer fixed or preoccupied with any particular thought or emotion; instead, the mind is open to everything. In fact, there is a Zen expression, "mind without mind," which means just that: the mind is open to everything and free of mind-attachment.

In modern-day mindfulness practices, which have drawn on Zen and other Buddhist practices, there is the teaching of non-identification, "I am not my thoughts," "thoughts are just thoughts"—they are not "me."

In meditation, we are invited to learn the art of becoming an observer—the canvas of the mind with all the colors, including ideas, desires, and prejudices, may appear on the surface of the mind. We learn to observe them, without becoming involved in them or over-identifying with them. As the level of consciousness changes, the power of the ego is reduced; in essence, the ego becomes weaker.

Empty Cup

In these words, an attempt to touch on the essence of Zen, from what has been written before, it is very clear that Zen, or any other spiritual practice for that matter, needs to be experienced first-hand. In Zen, to know or understand reality, that is one's own nature and the nature of the physical world, one must experience it and even transcend it.

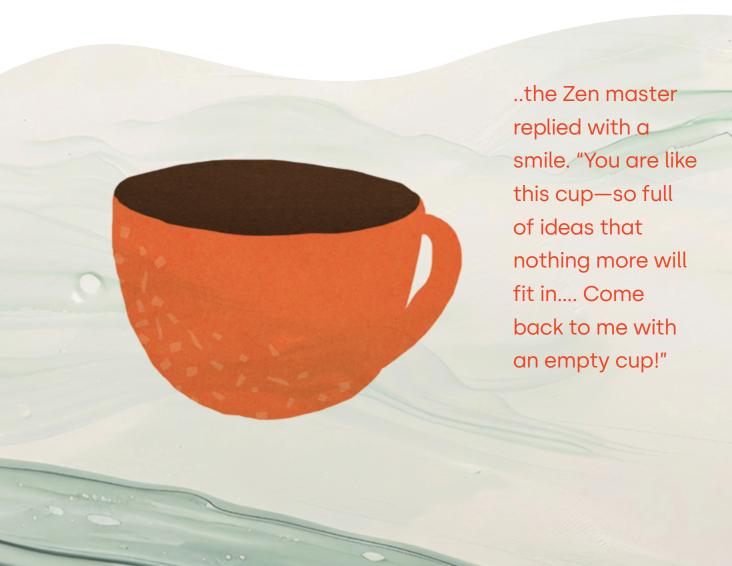
There is a famous story of the Empty Cup, and it goes like this:

One day, a student came to visit the Zen master seeking advice. He asked. "I have come to ask you to teach me about Zen."

After a short time, it became clear that the student was full of his own opinions and knowledge. Repeatedly, he would interrupt the master with his own stories and did not listen to what the Zen master had to say. The master calmly suggested that they have some tea.

So, the master poured the tea into his cup. The cup was full, yet he kept pouring until the tea overflowed onto the table, onto the floor, and everywhere. The student cried out, "Stop! The cup is full. Can't you see?"

"Exactly," the Zen master replied with a smile. "You are like this cup—so full of ideas that nothing more will fit in.... Come back to me with an empty cup!"





Heartfulness Gopichand Badminton Academy

The academy's commitment to excellence, guided by the vision of Pullela Gopichand and rooted in the values of Heartfulness.

World-Class Facilities

 14 International Standard Badminton Courts with Air Conditioned Facility.

World-class courts designed to meet global tournament standards.

- Highly Qualified Coaches
- Train under internationally certified professionals (BAI).
- Advanced Gymnasium, Swimming pool & Physiotherapy Center
 Top-tier fitness and recovery facilities to enhance performance.
- Personalized Nutritional Guidance
- Customized diet plans tailored to each athlete's needs.
- Mental Wellbeing Programs
- Focus on holistic development with meditation and relaxation techniques.
- Special Focus on every individual player.
- Pure Vegetarian Campus
- A clean, healthy, and sattvic environment.
- Air-Conditioned Hostel Facilities
- Comfortable and well-maintained accommodations for athletes.
- Equipment Requirement
- Players must bring their own sporting equipment.
- Admissions Through Trials Only
- Enrollment is based strictly on selection in performance trials
- Proven Track Record
- In just 2 years, our badminton players have earned:
- · 2 International Rankings
- · 6 National Rankings
- Numerous players with state level rankings

Eligibility

Age: 8-18 years

Basic badminton knowledge required

Shantaben International Cricket Academy for Girls

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 - Train under certified professionals.
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 Top-tier fitness and recovery facilities to enhance performance.
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- Customized diet plans tailored to each athlete's needs.
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 - Focus on holistic development with meditation and relaxation techniques. Special Focus on every individual player.
- Pure Vegetarian Campus
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- Comfortable and well-maintained accommodations for athletes.
- Equipment Requirement
 - Players must bring their own sporting equipment.
- Admissions Through Trials Only
 Enrollment is based strictly on selection in performance trials.

Eligibility

Age Group: 8-18 years

Skill Level: Open to beginners and intermediate players passionate about cricket.



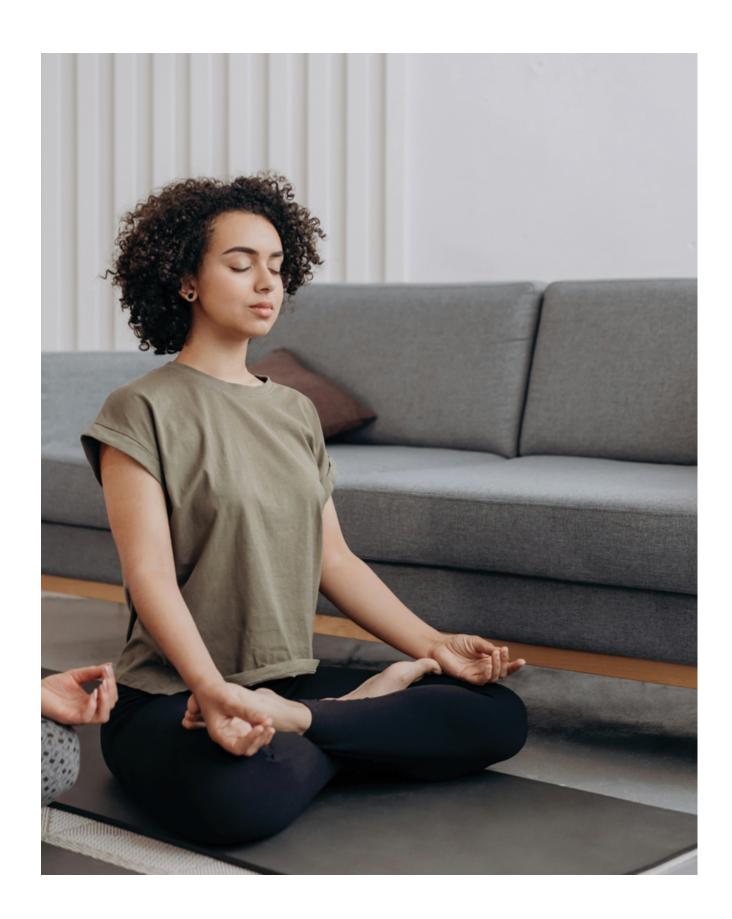






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Contact: +91 8519956041 Monday to Saturday



Do Spiritual Seekers Experience More Stress?

VICTOR KANNAN examines why those on a spiritual path may feel more stressed—and how that very turbulence can become a catalyst for peace and inner transformation.

he universal pursuit of peace and happiness is a multifaceted drive with profound roots in both ancient wisdom and modern understanding. Scriptures across traditions mandate this search as a path to divine connection and righteous living, framing true peace not as the absence of struggle but as an inner state achieved through a deeper understanding of life and its purpose. It is rooted in faith, forgiveness, service to others, and adherence to a moral purpose.

This spiritual perspective aligns remarkably with scientific findings, which identify specific reward systems and neurotransmitters, such as dopamine and serotonin, involved in feelings of contentment and joy. Psychology further supports the scriptural

emphasis on community and meaning, showing that strong social bonds, a sense of purpose, and practices such as gratitude and mindfulness are the most robust predictors of long-term well-being and emotional resilience.

Whether viewed through the lens of spirituality or the science of evolutionary psychology, human flourishing seems dependent on transcending self-interest, fostering strong relationships, and cultivating a mindset that values inner tranquility and purpose over fleeting external pleasures. This combined understanding provides a comprehensive basis for humanity's enduring quest for a more peaceful and fulfilling existence.

Peace indeed is the characteristic of the soul, which longs for peace

and rest. However, the soul is at the mercy of the mind, intellect, and ego. And they, in turn, are expressed through the faculties of the body and senses. So, all three aspects of life—body, mind, and soul—work together in an astonishing and wonderful manner.

A spiritual seeker leads their life consciously, practicing a discipline to improve themselves every day. However, experience shows that they also appear to go through exalted levels of stress. Why is it so?

First, the comparative state of mind that seeks peace gets more irritated by even small things in life, magnifying any experience of stress. This is especially common in the early days of spiritual practice and progress. For a spiritual seeker, a stress score of six

INSPIRATION

on the PSS-10 (Perceived Stress Scale) could easily feel like an eight or a nine on the same scale. This is because they seek peace and expect peace around them. When they get stressed, they feel its effects in an exaggerated way. It's like the sound of a pin dropping in a silent room—more striking than a loud clank in a crowded New York City subway station.

Another aspect of this is that when we are on a path of self-improvement, especially through practices like mindfulness, Vipassana, or Heartfulness, our awareness increases, our sensibilities are refined, and our ego is challenged. Taken together, these three shifts form a spiritual trifecta that, I believe, is how Nature accelerates our progress. It is through the refinement of the ego that we advance more rapidly.

Refinement of the ego results from both conscious practice and how elegantly we deal with our difficulties.

In Heartfulness, our earlier Masters, Babuji and Chariji, often reminded us that "Nature always cooperates." I heard this line many times when I began my practice about forty years ago, but I struggled to accept it. My mind went instead to other sayings, like the Tamil proverb "the toe that is hurt will be injured repeatedly," or the Japanese proverb "the nail that sticks out shall be hammered down." And although it isn't literally true, we also hear people say that suffering comes in threes. If that were the case, I would say it is Nature's mercy to get the job done quickly and efficiently when the ego is weak. When we suffer and ask, "Why me?", it would seem that more suffering

piles on us. When we learn to accept and cultivate the qualities of gratitude, love, and compassion, our ego transforms into humility, the final gate to complete spiritual emancipation. You see, from suffering we have the possibility of accelerated progress, and our self-transformation is assured, provided we have the right attitude.

The true transformation of the self begins as our consciousness evolves. This evolution is an intimately lived process that touches every part of who we are. As consciousness grows and expands, the mind gradually gives way to the heart. Our thoughts start to carry the warmth of feeling and empathy. We experience these feelings with our deep presence and sensitivity. We vibrate at a different frequency, calming others around us.

As consciousness grows and expands, the mind gradually gives way to the heart. Our thoughts start to carry the warmth of feeling and empathy. We experience these feelings with our deep presence and sensitivity. We vibrate at a different frequency, calming others around us.



In this state, we begin to detach from both material and emotional turbulence. Success and failure, praise and blame, pleasure and pain lose their power to shake us. The intellect becomes clear, guided by discernment and quiet wisdom. We start seeing life as it is, without the fog of emotional reaction or the pull of desire.

Even the ego, often misunderstood as the enemy of spiritual growth, transforms. It no longer drives us toward control or recognition. Instead, it matures into courage, wonder, and humility: the courage to face the truth, the wonder to

keep learning, and the humility to know that we are part of something larger.

This inner shift is why spiritual seekers sometimes appear to struggle more. They are undergoing deep reconstruction. The old structures of mind and ego dissolve, making space for something more expansive, more luminous, and far more peaceful. This process is like a butterfly forcing its way out of the chrysalis: a long period of apparent stillness followed by intense effort and a new form of life.

If you have chosen a spiritual path, why resist life's gifts even if some of them are in the form of suffering, grief, and loss? As your awareness expands, the layers of resistance begin to dissolve. In time, what once felt like turmoil gives way to stillness. The struggle subsides, and in its place arises a constant connection to the divine and hence a lasting peace. In that peace, the soul is joyful, and the evolution of consciousness is in full swing.



Warkplace

"Nothing will work unless you do."

MAYA ANGELOU





The Inevitability of Change and Its Repercussions

ICHAK ADIZES reflects on why change, problems, and solutions are inseparable—and on the leader's task of building an organization that can grow through that ongoing tension.

'm not saying anything new when I say that things change.
But what happens when change comes?

Change always brings something new, and many people immediately see that "new" as a problem and ask, "What are we going to do?"

I'm told that in Chinese, the words "problem" and "opportunity" are the same. That's why I coined the word "opporthreat." What does it mean? You have to decide. Do you want the new event to be a problem or an opportunity? It's up to you. Some people see only problems. Others see opportunities. But every problem is really an opportunity to learn something new. It's an opportunity to solve a problem.

I once saw a quote: "A person who believes he is wise is ignorant and a person who believes he is ignorant is wise." If you are constantly learning, then every problem becomes an opportunity to learn something new.

How do you solve a problem?

You have to decide what to do. But that's not enough. That's the deficiency of leadership training today. They teach how to make good decisions—marketing decisions, financial decisions—but they don't teach how to implement them. For implementation, you need to deal with stakeholders. That's called politics. But we don't teach politics in business schools.

Once you implement a solution to a problem or exploit an

opportunity, what happens? The solution causes change. In other words, the solution has created a new problem.

When will you have no more problems? When you stop changing, when you stop living.

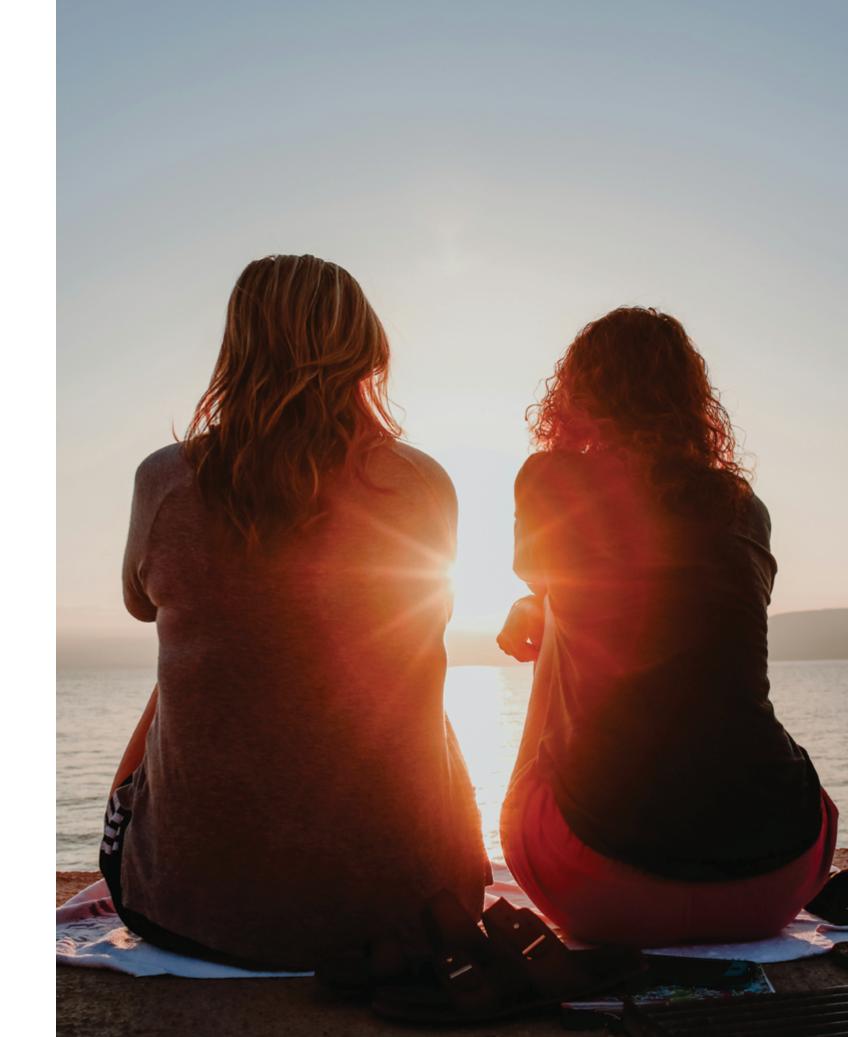
To be a leader, you must manage change. But to manage change well and get exceptional results, your organization must be healthy, because energy is limited. If you want to expand your business and the company has no energy, nothing will happen. If your company is sick, no matter how good your plans are, the plans won't work.

The purpose of leadership is to build a healthy organization that produces exceptional results.

If you are constantly learning, then every problem becomes an opportunity to learn something new.

"The words of the tongue should have three gatekeepers: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?"

ARABIC PROVERB



The Sacred Necessity of Presence:

Restoring Authentic Connection in Human Relationships



NEGIN M. KHORASANI reflects on accompanying her mother through illness to explore how presence, acceptance, and attentive relating can restore authenticity to our relationships.

hat follows springs from my own lived experience and ongoing contemplation as I accompany my mother through illness—a journey that continues to deepen my understanding of what it means to be truly present with another.

In our modern life, relationships are often reduced to transactions. Life moves quickly; we ask and respond, request and fulfill, act and react, and somewhere in this familiar rhythm, the quiet essence of connection can slip away. Relationships can so easily become transactional, shaped more by what we *do* for each other than by how we *are* with each other.

This loss of presence becomes even more visible when we feel rushed: hurrying to get to work and missing the chance to say or receive "I love you"; leaving for a trip without pausing for a calm embrace, or, more painfully, in moments when life itself is hastened toward an ending—as we see in the growing acceptance of assisted dying. Sometimes, in that haste, there is not enough time for hearts to meet, to speak, to process and make sense of what is unfolding, or to part with peace.

It is in such moments that we are reminded of the deeper meaning of connection; that our relationships are not just built on action but on presence. What nourishes us most is not what we give or receive, but the quality of being we bring to each encounter.

Authentic Relationship: Seeing Beyond Function

An authentic relationship is not defined by the sum of tasks completed or roles performed. Rather, it is rooted in the recognition of the other as a full, living human being, with their own inner world, vulnerabilities, and dignity. As the philosopher Martin Buber famously observed

An authentic relationship is not defined by the sum of tasks completed or roles performed. Rather, it is rooted in the recognition of the other as a full, living human being, with their own inner world, vulnerabilities, and dignity.

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RELATIONSHIPS **RELATIONSHIPS**

in *I and Thou*, the distinction between the I-Thou and I-It relationship is foundational: in the former, the other is encountered as a presence, not an object to be managed.

In such relationships, the message is simple but profound:

"You are seen for who you are, not just what you do."

Humanistic psychology echoes this sentiment. In On Becoming a Person, psychologist Carl Rogers describes the transformative power of unconditional positive regard, arguing that people flourish when they feel deeply accepted for their intrinsic worth rather than for their usefulness or conformity to expectation.

Acceptance: Connection Before Correction

Acceptance is often misunderstood as passive tolerance. Yet authentic acceptance is an active stance of presence, not compliance. It begins with the decision to pause the impulse to correct or control, and instead to witness another's experience with full attention, with openness to true connection.

Interpersonal neurobiology through the work of Daniel Siegel and Stephen Porges, among others—shows that co-regulation within relationships—the mutual attunement of nervous systems

—is essential for emotional and relational well-being. Acceptance creates the safety that allows both parties to step out of habitual defense patterns and experience genuine contact.

Acceptance is not the same as agreement. It does not require us to condone harmful behavior or to relinquish boundaries. Instead, it is an embodied acknowledgment of the other's reality, creating fertile ground for empathy, understanding, and relational depth to flourish.

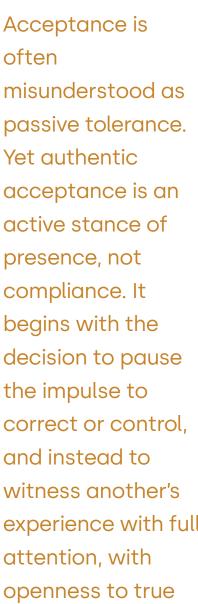
From Transaction to Presence: Changing the **Dynamics**

Many relationships, particularly in families, caregiving, and institutional contexts, have shifted toward functionality, where roles, tasks, and expectations dominate. To restore authenticity, we must intentionally interrupt these mechanistic patterns.

Shift the focus from doing to being.

Before responding or acting, pause. Ask internally: Am I noticing this person as a human being, not a checklist?

Acceptance is often misunderstood as passive tolerance. Yet authentic acceptance is an active stance of presence, not compliance. It begins with the decision to pause the impulse to correct or control, and instead to witness another's experience with full attention, with openness to true connection.





Small, deliberate acts—a shared silence, a gaze that communicates recognition, a moment of listening without agenda—recalibrate the interaction from transactional to connective.

Cultivate presence within constraints.

Even when caregiving is necessary or time is limited, the way actions are performed can convey dignity and acknowledgment. Folding presence into service transforms the action itself into relational nourishment.

Honor reciprocity in attention, not just tasks.

Relationships are not truly balanced by who does what; they are balanced by the mutual acknowledgment of inner worlds.

These strategies are informed both by contemplative traditions, which emphasize presence as a vehicle of transformation, and by relational neuroscience, which highlights the biological importance of attuned connection.

Relationships are not truly balanced by who does what; they are balanced by the mutual acknowledgment of inner worlds.



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Every Encounter is an Invitation to Connect in the Context of Illness

Illness is a profound reminder of life's finitude. In such circumstances, the relational stakes are clarified: we may not know how long we have together, and the *quality* of each encounter becomes far more significant than the quantity of time.

When relationships are reduced to requests and tasks, we risk sacrificing the relational depth that matters most. Illness, paradoxically, offers an opportunity to reclaim what may have been lost; the heart of the relationship itself.

Practical implications include:

- Conscious slowing: intentionally take time to truly see and listen, even amid pressing needs.
- Shared presence over problemsolving: being together in stillness can be more restorative than completing a task.
- Savoring moments: small gestures, shared laughter, or silent acknowledgment carry outsized relational impact when time is limited.
- Elevating dialogue into connection: every conversation, however

functional, can carry an undertone of recognition and respect.

In other words, illness reframes relational priorities: presence becomes the most important gift we can offer. Even a single authentic interaction can be profoundly transformative when approached with intentionality and love.

A Shift in Inner Posture

The radical shift begins within. It is not about changing the other but about changing how we are with them. A subtle inner posture might sound like:

- "Before I attempt to correct, I will first understand."
- "Before I respond, I will feel your presence."
- "Before I act, I will let attention precede agenda."

These shifts are not sentimental; they are evolutionary. As contemplative science and phenomenological philosophy converge, we recognize that the quality of attention is formative: it shapes both the relational field and the inner world of all involved.



In this light, relationships become not just functional exchanges, but fields of mutual awakening, where illness, aging, and finite time sharpen the focus, revealing the enduring truth: presence is both the path and the gift.

Conclusion: Presence as the Highest Expression of Care

When life is uncertain, illness looms, or time feels finite, the mechanistic and transactional patterns of human relationships are exposed for what they are: protective habits that obscure true connection. Reclaiming authenticity is not a luxury—it is an urgent act of love and wisdom.

Restoring authentic connection is:

- To recognize the sacred in the mundane.
- To see the human being behind the request.
- To respond with care that honors both the inner world and practical reality.
- To cultivate relational presence as a form of lasting nourishment, even in fleeting time.

As Parker Palmer reminds us in *On the Brink of Everything*, "Human presence is the most powerful force for transformation in the world." In this light, relationships become not just functional exchanges, but fields of mutual awakening, where illness, aging, and finite time sharpen the focus, revealing the enduring truth: presence is both the path and the gift.

"Earth breathes in us."

MATTHEW EDWARD HALL



Ramayana to Reality

The Continuous Search for Sanjeevini

DR. ANANTHANENI SREENATH traces the botanical, medicinal, and mythological journey of Sanjeevini, the life-restoring herb of the Ramayana.



anjeevini, a sacred herb known for its remarkable life-restoring and medicinal properties, is featured prominently in the ancient Indian epic, the Ramayana. The non-flowering plant, scientifically identified as Selaginella bryopteris, belongs to the family Selaginellaceae and the phylum Pteridophyta. It is known for its extraordinary ability to revive after drying out, a characteristic similar to that of bryophytes.

Sanjeevini's historical significance, medicinal uses, and modern research have captivated interest for centuries, from the time of the *Ramayana* to the present day. Growing mainly on rocky slopes and outcrops where water collects, it is used in Indian traditional medicine to treat a wide range of ailments. Its unique ability to restore consciousness and alleviate

various health issues—such as fever, paralysis, and skin diseases—has made it an invaluable herb in indigenous healing practices.

The meaning of *Sanjeevini* is "that which revives life," a sacred and divine herb that, according to the *Ramayana*, revived the life of Lakshmana, Lord Rama's brother.

It is a non-flowering plant that belongs to the phylum Pteridophyta, positioned evolutionarily between bryophytes and angiosperms. Bryophytes are unique in their ability to revive immediately upon the addition of water, even after being separated from the soil and drying out. In contrast, angiosperms and most pteridophytes, once detached and dried, do not return to life simply by adding water, even if they are immersed.

Even when Sanjeevini appears dry and lifeless (Image 2), it revives upon exposure to water (Image 3). This resurrection ability, common in bryophytes, inspired the naming of this plant in the family Selaginellaceae as *Selaginella bryopteris* (Sanjeevini). It has now been documented on hillocks near Kanha Sarovar, close to Kanha Shanti Vanam, and in other microhabitats where rainwater collects and remains for some time.

Description

Sanjeevini, scientifically known as *Selaginella bryopteris* (Image 3), is renowned for its extraordinary medicinal and rejuvenating properties, which have been documented in the ancient Indian medical texts *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*.

ENVIRONMENT



Image 1: Sanjeevini (Selaginella bryopteris), habitat and ideal place of growing.

It is widely distributed across upland regions of India, where tribal communities collect and sell it in places such as Srisailam, Ahobilam, Tirupati, Haridwar, and Varanasi, all prominent pilgrimage centers.

In the *Ramayana*, the herb is first mentioned and described by Sushena to Hanuman and is located in the Dronagiri mountain range in the Himalayas of India. Over the years, extensive research, along with current field studies, has shown that Sanjeevini occurs in various regions across the

country. It is also frequently mentioned in connection with the Dronachalam region in the Eastern Ghats of southern India, which some devotional traditions link to the same north—south route between the Himalayas and Sri Lanka described in the epic.

This plant primarily thrives on shaded rock faces and in narrow crevices near natural water sources, growing on fine clay deposits on rocks and in rocky fissures (Image 1). It is highly adaptable and can survive in a wide variety of climatic and moisture conditions.

The plant is a procumbent to decumbent herb with a bifurcately branched stem, bearing alternate leaves at about a sixty-degree angle, and two rows of smaller leaves along the lower part of the stem.

Uses and Benefits of Sanjeevini

The Adivasi (indigenous) Chenchu tribes of the Nallamalai region in Andhra Pradesh refer to Sanjeevini as *pitta adugu*. They traditionally burn its incense and prepare a tonic from it as





Image 2: Sanjeevini (Selaginella bryopteris), a day before rain.

a powerful immunity-boosting medicine for newborn babies.

Sanjeevini is used to rapidly revive unconscious patients and to reduce high fever. Across India, it is a key ingredient in traditional medicinal formulations used to treat a range of conditions, including nervous weakness, low sperm count, constipation, enteritis, indigestion, fever, miscarriage, anemia, kidney stones, paralysis, skin diseases, bone fractures, jaundice, toothache, blood-clotting disorders, diarrhea, asthma, ulcers, back pain, and for general blood purification.

To quickly restore vitality and energy in patients suffering from diarrhea who are exhausted and weak, immediate relief is said to be obtained by giving a powder of the dried herb mixed with cow's milk.

Sanjeevini in the Ramayana

In the Yuddha Kanda of the Ramayana, during the war between Rama and Ravana, a fierce battle takes place between Lakshmana, Lord Rama's brother, and Meghnath (Indrajit), Ravana's son. During this fight, Lakshmana is struck by a poisoned arrow. When he falls unconscious and his life is in danger due to the potency of the poison, Rama calls upon Sushena, the Ayurvedic physician in the the monkey kingdom.

After examining Lakshmana, Sushena advises that specific herbs must be brought before sunrise in order to treat him. However, these herbs are not available locally and must be collected from the Dronagiri mountain range of the Himalayas. When Rama asks who can travel such a distance and return in time, Hanuman steps forward and says, "I will go and bring them."

Sushena instructs Hanuman:
"Go immediately to the peaks of
Dronagiri mountain and bring
back these four herbs: Sanjeevini
(the herb that restores life),
Vishalyakarani (the herb that
neutralizes poison and removes
arrows), Sandhanakarani (the
herb that mends broken bones
and joints), and Savarnakarani
(the herb that heals wounds and
restores the skin and its radiance)."
He explains the properties of each
herb and gives Hanuman clues to
help identify them in the field.

Hanuman quickly reaches Dronagiri and begins searching

ENVIRONMENT



Image 3: Sanjeevini (*Selaginella bryopteris*), wet after a day of rain and soaked in water.

The meaning of
Sanjeevini is "that
which revives life,"
a sacred and divine
herb that,
according to the
Ramayana, revived
the life of
Lakshmana, Lord
Rama's brother.





for the herbs. After an extensive search, unable to identify them precisely, he lifts the entire mountain and carries it back to Lanka. Because there is not enough space in Lanka to set the mountain down, Hanuman asks Sushena to come up to the mountain to collect the herbs.

Sushena gathers the herbs, prepares the medicine, and uses it to treat Lakshmana and the other wounded warriors. Lakshmana and the rest of the warriors recover. As Hanuman returns the mountain to its original place, parts of it are said to have fallen in different locations—some in Lanka, and larger portions in the Eastern

Ghats in southern India, close to the Nallamalai mountain ranges.

Conclusion

Sanjeevini continues to be a revered plant in both ancient and contemporary medicinal practice. Its life-restoring abilities, as described in the *Ramayana*, and its many therapeutic uses in traditional medicine highlight its significance in Indian culture and healing.

Modern research has confirmed its widespread presence and promising benefits, making it a valuable subject of ongoing study. The story of Sanjeevini's collection by Hanuman, as narrated in the *Ramayana*, not only emphasizes its mythological importance but also reinforces its continued relevance in the natural world.

Reports of Sanjeevini in places such as the Dronachalam region and Kanha Sarovar—sites that later tradition aligns with Hanuman's journey from the Himalayas to Sri Lanka—underscore both its symbolic and medicinal importance. As research into its properties advances, Sanjeevini remains a testament to the enduring connection between ancient knowledge and contemporary science.

58 Heartfulness



Artwork by KARLA SACHSE

"Mystery is at the heart of creativity.
That, and surprise."

JULIA CAMERON





What the Hands See

Artist KARLA SACHSE in conversation with VANESSA PATEL about paper, politics, and the body as a vessel for memory.

Q: Looking through your catalog, Karla, I'm struck by such a rich body of work. I saw some of it while you were producing it and again at one of your Berlin shows. You've used paper in such unique ways! You've taken something seemingly fragile and transformed it into something enduring. Why paint on paper, rather than canvas, for instance?

At first, I painted on canvases and boards, but soon I started thinking that other people were better at painting than I was. Changing to paper made it easier to destroy the works later. You can't do that to a canvas. You can't tear it up. You can crumple paper and throw it away—which I never did!

Q: You've used everything scraps of paper, documents, ticket receipts, shredded paper, newspapers, paper in all forms.

There is one sentence I recited yesterday when I was at the Free University of Berlin for a talk. It says about paper: "solid stuff and fluid again and often sliding off the hands of the creators"—just describing the material. I liked the idea of using things that were

already used, with a history and a story inside them.

Q: Absolutely, every tiny little bit of paper has a story to tell. Was this way of working inspired by your early days in East Berlin?

It was when I met my partner, Joseph, who was already involved in this international Mail Art network [a decentralized global exchange in which artists mailed small artworks to one another, creating connections that bypassed official state channels and, in East Germany, offered a rare and sometimes risky way to reach the outside world] and was making things that could fit into an envelope to protect them and, hopefully, keep them out of the control of the secret service. So, the first things I did were small, and some I never showed during that time in East Germany because they were political. I would cut out newspaper reports and comment on them, and this was dangerous.

Q: That would've gotten you into a lot of trouble!



Yes, and I had a son, so I didn't want to go to prison. But I also did bigger works. I got the opportunity to do my first room installation in June 1989. I filled a room with paper: the walls were covered with blank, beautiful, whitish papers, and the floor was littered with crumpled papers, so you had to wade through it.

Central to this was a tall column of newspapers, the main organ of the Communist Party, which, of course, you couldn't read there and which almost nobody wanted to read anymore. I could make a statement and still look "innocent", with "blue eyes," as we say. "I'm not guilty, I just put these beautiful newspapers in a stack."

Q: That was really clever. You've done extensive work with frottage, making rubbings,



and you seem to see images in discarded objects and bring them to life. How do you decide what you want to take a rubbing of?

Where I have my country garden now, there are a lot of big and small rocks deposited during the Ice Age. I thought something must have happened to them when they were brought here by ice. So, I looked at their surface. We humans always want to see ourselves reflected in things!

I placed some paper on one rock, and then you have this surprise. There's something that looks like eyes showing up, and then you examine by touch, and the stone itself tells you where to stop. But it's always different from what your eyes have seen.

I did an exhibition called *The Hands See Different*. The rubbing hands see differently from the eyes, and it's always a surprise.

You sent me some beautiful, fine muslin cloth some time back, and I used this instead of paper—for example, to rub the ghosts of the place out of the walls of a former power plant in Denmark. The cloth hung and moved in the space, so it came to life in a different way.



Q: I shouldn't have a favorite, but my favorite body of your work is Baskets of Experience. They're woven paper objects resembling body parts, and you explained that each one you made in a different country using the newspapers you found discarded in that place. How did you conceptualize these "vessels"?

I learned how to weave baskets at a Womanifesto workshop in Thailand in 2001. It needed a lot of patience, and I knew immediately I would like to shape body parts from the rolled-up paper.

At that time, there was a big discussion in the media about prenatal diagnostics, the ultrasound, and the doctors had so much control, and that made me furious. So, there in Thailand, I made a uterus, which was part of [contemporary art exhibition] Documenta 15 and is now in the archive of Womanifesto in Thailand. I knew immediately that I would continue working on this.

Wherever I had time—let's say, a week or more—I started to weave a new object. Before traveling, I would wonder, what do I have to do with Denmark? What do I have to do with India? And I asked my body which part of it would relate most to that special place I was going to. So, for India, I made a longing vessel—a heart—because India is the heart of the world for me.

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CREATIVITY

Q: I was going to ask you why the heart for India, and I know you've been there a few times and worked there as well.

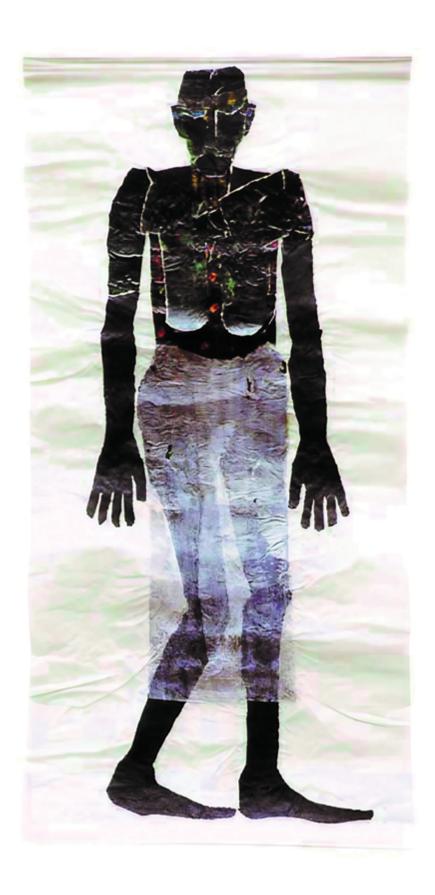
When we had the residency in Kochi, Kerala, there was enough time to weave the heart. From the beginning, it was essential for me to include people's opinions and stories. So, I asked everyone who worked with us or was around us for their "heart" experiences, the pains and pleasures.

They wrote them down on paper and, in front of their eyes, I rolled up the paper—so you could see that it was handwritten, but you couldn't read it anymore. The secret was kept and included in the basket weaving. This was, from the beginning, another idea of collaboration, which is very important for me.

Q: That's such a uniquely inclusive way of giving them a voice and space, and at the same time respecting their privacy and innermost feelings. And again, those vessels are holding their stories.

In 2023, when we had this big exhibition in the Bangkok Art & Culture Centre in Thailand, I had a great opportunity for an installation. The woven objects hung from the ceiling to eye level, so visitors moved between them.





Many young people were visiting this exhibition, which we don't often see in Berlin and in the West. You could see that they tried to read or to figure things out—and perhaps to "weave" their own story in response.

Q: What did you want them to feel and experience when they saw these body parts in basket form?

From the creating point, it's an experience of myself, of my body and mind related to a certain place. But because the pieces have shapes you can recognize, if you have some idea of anatomy, you can include your own experiences. You can ask yourself, what do I think and feel about my own digestion, through the intestine, and mentally?

Q: I love the eyes—the five eyeballs.

Yes, the eyes are very, very special because I did them in Vietnam after talking to war veterans. You cannot ask them directly about their experiences, so I asked them what they've seen in their life.

They didn't talk about the war, but about their surroundings and their life in general. So, these eyes are particular. They represent five different people, and to this day, they're very touching for me as well.















Cochin, India



Noordgouwe, Netherlands



Goblin Park, Utah

Q: I know you as an artist, but a big part of your life has been as an art teacher, and you've influenced so many young people. What did you gain from it? How did that process help you in your creativity?

In my studio at school, the students did painting. I could help each of them individually with what they needed to know about their work. Of course, I used to expend a lot of energy to prepare all this teaching, but I always had the feeling that I got back the same amount of energy from their being, their youthful being.

Nowadays, it's great to have a community of young people.
When I'm having a show opening,

I like seeing young people out there, not just people my age.

Yesterday, I gave a talk at one of the universities in West Berlin to thirty-five students, and I showed some of my work. They're studying literature, and the seminar was about Concrete and Visual Poetry. Very soon, they started asking very intimate questions about the political situation and other matters related to my work.

They're all born after the Berlin Wall came down, so they're not directly affected by that situation. Again, it was an immense pleasure to see these young people watching and being curious.

Q: Karla, your work is multilocational; you've worked and exhibited all over the world. Has this kind of wanderlust come from perhaps living for some time in a closed environment, confined to a space with restrictions? From the creating point, it's an experience of myself, of my body and mind related to a certain place. But because the pieces have shapes you can recognize, if you have some idea of anatomy, you can include your own experiences. You can ask yourself, what do I think and feel about my own digestion, through the intestine, and mentally?

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I had worked with some underground groups before to change our society. But when the Wall was coming down, it was clear we were going to the Western system immediately, which was not a good situation for many people.

I thought, well, it's too late for me. I couldn't go live in New York for a year as I would have liked because my son was small.

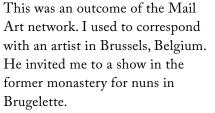
But since then, I've been to all the continents with projects and within Europe through this Mail Art network. At first, I didn't want to go to Paris and London so as



not to destroy my illusions about them, but I finally went after visiting many other European countries.

Q: I've seen one of the pieces from your work, Settled Down Women, which are full-sized collages of female figures. Can you talk a little bit about that work?



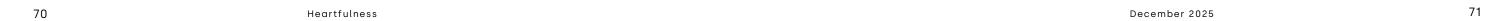


This made me think about the feminist writings and stories that came from the West, and although I've never really had to deal with the problems of patriarchy, I was very much in solidarity with the

cause. So I made these twelve matriarchal figures—four white ones representing young virgins, four red ones representing the mothers, and four black ones representing the older women. These represent the holy trinity that existed long before the one in Christianity.

I worked on these for over fifteen days without sleep, and once they were done, I rolled them up and sent them off to Belgium, not really knowing what would happen to them. Fortunately, I had an aunt who gave me the opportunity to visit her on her eighty-fourth birthday, and I was able to obtain an illegal substitute passport to travel to Belgium. So, I saw the exhibition there in this monastery.

Q: That's incredible. You made this before the Wall came down, posted them off in a roll,



and saw them displayed! That must've been mind-blowing.

It was mind-blowing because they were all hanging in one big space, and you could see them from the back as well—it was beautiful, more abstract than from the front.

Later, they were shown in another place in Belgium and in a church in Denmark. When they came back to me, I thought, I'll never show them again (which I regret), so I sent them to women I knew around the world to display so others could see them.

Q: Your matriarchal figures have traveled out of East Berlin and gone everywhere. Is there anything that you wanted to share that we haven't talked about?

Yes, in my catalog, there is a statement called "*Matter* – *Language* – *Space*." I wrote this in 1998, and it's a bringing together of all my work.

Q: It reads like poetry to me.

Yes, exactly this. You can read it in columns, top-down, or horizontally across the columns, and it still makes sense.

Q: That's a wonderful note to finish on. I've discovered even more aspects of your work, and there's more yet to explore. Thank you, Karla, for your time, and please continue making these amazing connections.

To discover more about Karla Sachse's art and ongoing projects, visit her official website: www.karla-sachse.de

Artwork by KARLA SACHSE

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All Knowledge Stems From the Heart



"Compassion is the wish to see others free from suffering."

DALAI LAMA

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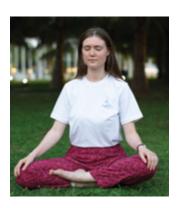
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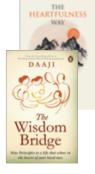
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