

NOVEMBER 2025

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

The Divine
Mechanics of
Change

DAAJI

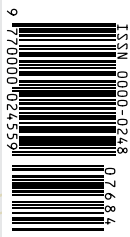
Grace is the
Creative Spark

ELIZABETH

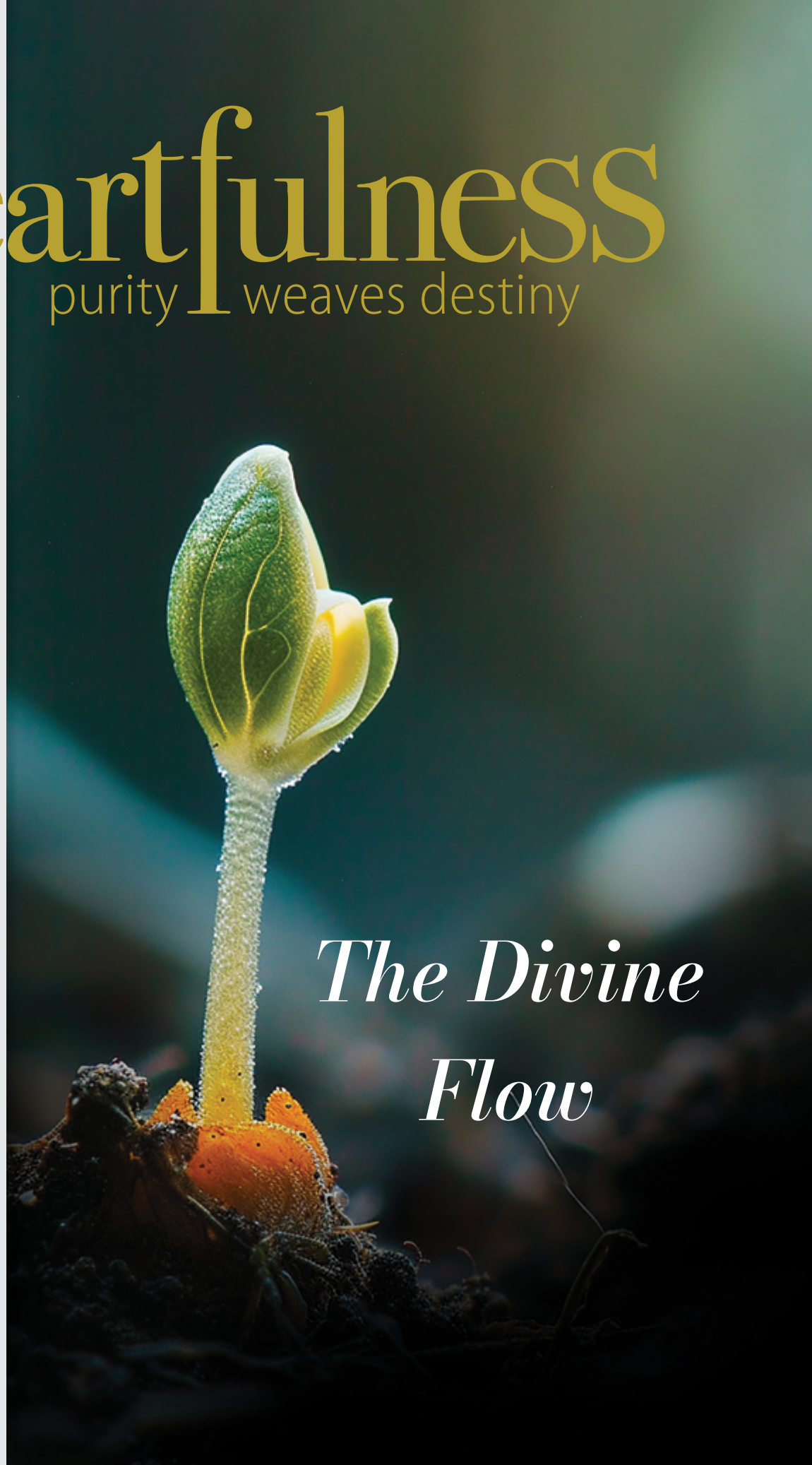
DENLEY

Gratitude's Gift

ALANDA GREENE



*The Divine
Flow*



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“

My heart was in a cage. My life was a long struggle to find happiness, to overcome fear, and to find love I had lost. I did not give up, and that is what my story is about.

—ICHAK K. ADIZES

”

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.

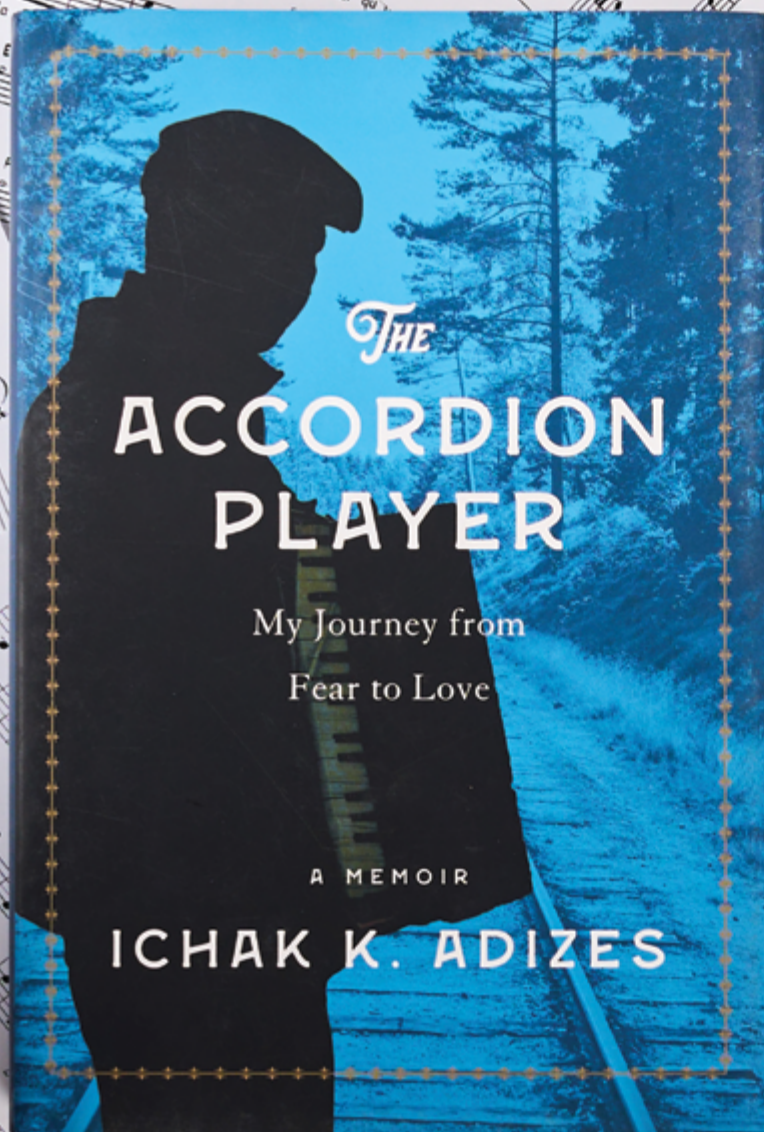
Dr. Adizes's personal story is more than a string of external events that propelled him through adversity after adversity to become the insightful, compassionate person he is today. It is also a map of his journey into a heart which, like the accordion that he played to earn a living and put himself 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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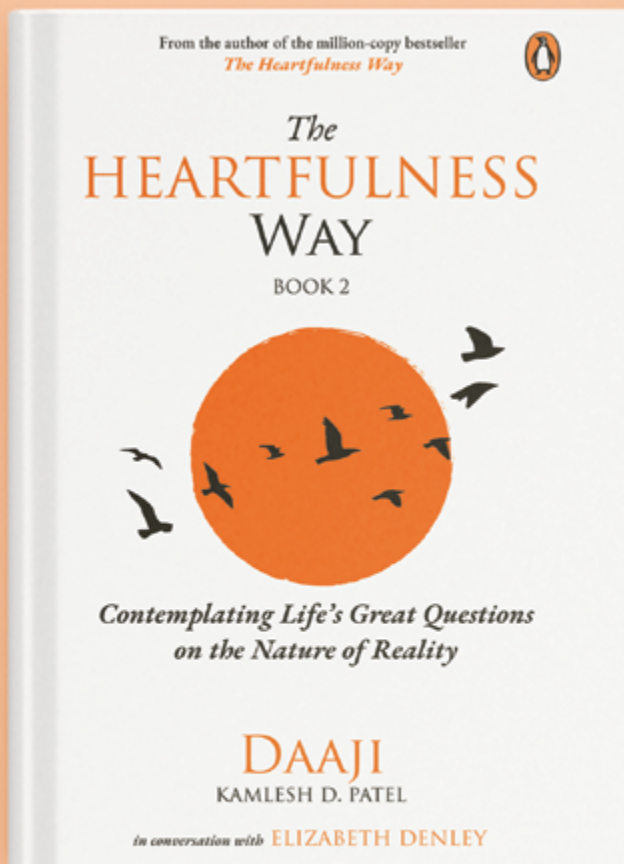


NEW RELEASE

From the author of the million-copy bestseller
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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The Divine Flow

Dear readers,

This month, we explore the divine flow—the currents of benevolence that reach us from beyond. Whether through grace’s spontaneous touch, the directed stream of *pranahuti*, or other sacred channels, these divine mechanics each work in their own distinct way, touching the heart, clearing obstacles, and opening new dimensions of existence.

In this issue, Daaji clarifies the distinct ways divine assistance operates, distinguishing between grace, *pranahuti*, *shaktipath*, and *prana-pratishtha*. Elizabeth Denley reveals grace as the creative spark behind breakthroughs. Jarna Khimani traces her journey from desire to stillness. Eilish Butler discovers spirituality through Hildegard’s sacred chants. Ichak Adizes contemplates how love, unbounded by time and space, is the primal force of creation. Ravi Venkatesan shows how Heartfulness builds internal agency and workplace resilience. Charles Eisenstein examines virtual intelligence and authentic connection. Jason Nutting explores courage beyond temporary relief. Alanda Greene reflects on gratitude’s gifts. Dr. Roxanne M. St. Clair guides us in recognizing inherent value. Victor Kannan returns us to basics. B. Rathinasabapathy finds wisdom in the chameleon’s patience. Dr. Pal discusses gut health and happiness, and Liaa Kumar shares a fable about inner light.

Next month, we explore “Journey from the Beginning.” We welcome your submissions at contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

Happy reading!
The editors



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DAAJI

Daaji is the Heartfulness Guide. He is an innovator and researcher, equally at home in the fields of spirituality, science, and the study of consciousness. His work opens new pathways for understanding and experiencing human potential.



CHARLES EISENSTEIN

Charles is a writer, philosopher, speaker and pioneer, who has been exploring the need for society's transformation for some years now. He has focused light on our economic, social and political systems, and the need for us to move from a paradigm of separation to that of interbeing. His work can be found at charleseisenstein.org.



ROXANNE M. ST. CLAIR

Dr. Roxanne M. St. Clair is an award-winning leadership strategist, author, creator of The Value In You® cards, trustee and mentor. She guides individuals and leaders to embrace their unique gifts, fostering confidence, connection, and heart-centered growth worldwide.



VICTOR KANNAN

Victor has been an avid practitioner of Heartfulness Meditation and a trainer for more than 30 years. As a career CFO he has been able to combine the benefits of meditation in the everyday management of his duties and responsibilities. He lives with his wife in Atlanta and has a daughter.



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Elizabeth is a writer, editor, Heartfulness trainer, and facilitator of interactive programs in consciousness and personal development, bringing together the fields of science and spirituality. She is the Editor-in-Chief Emerita, 2015-2025 of HeartfulnessMagazine.



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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.

contributors



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Dr. Pal Manickam is an Indian American board-certified gastroenterologist who uses medical comedy to educate millions about gut health and disease prevention. With 5.4 million social media followers across YouTube and Instagram, he makes complex medical topics accessible while donating proceeds to palliative care in India.



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Dr. Adizes is a leading management expert. He has received 21 honorary doctorates and is the author of 27 books that have been translated into 36 languages. He is recognized as one of the top 30 thought leaders of America.



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Rathinasabapathy is an ecologist who has led significant ecological projects, e.g., the restoration of Adyar Eco Park, the conservation of the endangered Rudraksha tree, and numerous plantation and greening efforts across the Western Ghats and East Coast. He has authored 15 books and over 55 research papers.



EILISH BUTLER

Eilish Butler trained in classical singing in the Netherlands, holds an M.A. in Chant & Song from the University of Limerick, and studied vocal pedagogy and therapeutic singing in Germany. A Heartfulness practitioner since 1996, she has seen, over years of teaching, how Uncovering the Voice nurtures spiritual awakening, wellbeing, and vocal capacity.



LIAA KUMAR

Liaa is a sophomore at the University of Texas, majoring in Economics and Computer Science. She enjoys running, reading, and baking. She's passionate about making mental health resources more accessible, has created two mental wellness apps, and has researched how technology can make the mental health journey personal and inclusive.



JARNA KHIRMANI

Jarna Khimani is an IT Manager at Capgemini with a deep love for words and mythology. In her writing, she explores the connections between myth, meaning, and spirituality. Her spiritual practice centers on meditation, and she follows the teachings of Guru Mahatria.

self-care

“With self-compassion, we give
ourselves the same kindness and care
we’d give to a good friend.”

KRISTIN NEFF





Embracing The Value Within

DR. ROXANNE M. ST. CLAIR on seeing the value in you—and in others—and making it a daily practice.

What if, each time you encountered someone, you sensed their real value—and then yours?

In this 8.2-billion-piece jigsaw called life, every piece is significant. Some are big, some small, and there are a variety of shapes and tones. That is the beauty of the puzzle; having a complete picture requires all of the pieces. In times such as these, when self-comparison keeps our joy from growing, it is mindful to remember that you were born with your own unique gifts and talents. Yes, you may have similarities to someone else, but there is an element of you that is your special contribution to humankind.

The Heart of Value

When I created *The Value In You*® cards, it was with a single intention: to remind people of their innate worth. Too often, we are conditioned to measure value by external standards, titles, possessions, achievements, likes, or followers. Although recognition and concepts of success have their place, they are not the true essence of who we are.

Value is not something you earn; it is something you embody. It lives in the quiet moments of kindness, the listening ear, the creative spark, the unshakable resilience you didn't even know you had until life made it necessary.

Value is not something you earn; it is something you embody. It lives in the quiet moments of kindness, the listening ear, the creative spark, the unshakable resilience you didn't even know you had until life made it necessary.

I remember a conversation with a leader who was exhausted from carrying the weight of responsibility. She felt overlooked and undervalued, despite her continuous levels of contribution. I invited her to reflect on one key question from the cards: “What is the gift that I bring to others”? Her response was not about her role or her status; it was about her ability to bring calm in times of chaos. She realised that this quality, often overlooked by her, was what others relied on. That shift in perspective did more than renew her energy; it gave her permission to see herself differently and, in turn, to treat herself with more compassion. It also boosted her confidence.

This is the heart of value. It's not found outside of you. It's a part of you that just needs you to own it.

Health, Wealth, and Relationships: The Three Pillars of Value

When we truly embrace our value, it transforms the way that we live. It flows into every aspect of our lives, shaping how we relate to our health, wealth, and relationships.

Health:

“Taking care of your health, mind, body, and spirit, is the best way that you can serve yourself and others.”

—*The Value In You*®

Our bodies are the vehicles through which we experience life. Yet, how often do we keep pushing them, skipping rest, numbing pain, and neglecting nourishment because we forget to value ourselves and prioritize our well-being? When you know your value, you treat your body as a sacred vessel, not an afterthought. Self-care becomes non-negotiable. Acknowledging your worth in this way helps you make choices that strengthen and sustain you, so you can be and give more. You give your best.





Wealth:

“Your wealth goes far beyond your finances; your knowledge and the people in your life are all part of your wealth, for they contribute to the experiences that enrich you.”

—*The Value In You*®

Wealth is often reduced to numbers in a bank account. But true wealth is rooted in gratitude, resourcefulness, and the ability to use what we have for meaningful impact. When you recognise your value, you stop chasing worth through material comparison and instead find fulfilment by doing and being a part of things that bring you joy.

I have seen people who do not have much still live a full life because they know the value of community, kindness, and creativity. And on the other hand, I have seen some with financial abundance live in scarcity and loneliness because they do not believe that they are enough. *Wealth without value feels empty; wealth aligned with value feels expansive.*

Relationships:

“The quality of your relationship is a reflection of the effort put in by both parties... A relationship is a two-way medium that requires conscious input.”

—*The Value In You*®

At its core, value is about awareness, not just of self, but of others. Relationships flourish when we see the humanity, the gifts, and the worth of the person in front of us. Imagine the transformation in families, workplaces, and communities if, before every conversation, we silently reminded ourselves: This person has value, just like me.

This simple shift changes the tone of the interaction, softens or avoids conflict, and opens the heart to compassion. It moves us from judgment to curiosity, from competition to collaboration. After all, every jigsaw piece connects to another. Without those connections, the picture remains incomplete.

Starting Your Day

How, then, do we remember to own our value in the rush of daily life? This is where mindfulness and Heartfulness come in. I have found that one of the most powerful ways to do this is to set the tone for your day, rather than letting the day set the tone for you. Imagine beginning each morning not with your phone or thinking about your to-do list, but with a few minutes of silent gratitude. My first thought on waking is, “Thank you for the grace of a new day!” This is a reminder to me that I still have a difference to make in the world, so even if it is something small, I can still make a difference today. Quite often, it might just be smiling at a stranger on the way to the station.

During the Day

Throughout the day, notice the “lens” through which you see life. Consider, “Am I judging, criticising, comparing, or am I appreciating, learning, and looking for the lesson?” Shifting from judgment to appreciation softens the heart and reconnects you with value, both your own and others’.

End of the Day Reflection

To decompress from the day, before going to sleep, take a few minutes to journal. Some questions that you can consider are:

- How did I honor my value today?
- How did I recognize the value in others?
- What difference did I make today?
- What will I carry forward into tomorrow?

This gentle reflection closes the day with awareness, gratitude, and peace.

I have found that one of the most powerful ways to do this is to set the tone for your day, rather than letting the day set the tone for you. Imagine beginning each morning not with your phone or thinking about your to-do list, but with a few minutes of silent gratitude.



Courage:

From Relief to Presence

JASON NUTTING on why relief is temporary—and how courage, rooted in the heart, endures.

We all seek relief: less stress, fewer unknowns, a lighter weight of unmet expectations, less strain between who we are and who we think we should be. While relief may quiet things briefly, it doesn't save the heart. The feeling quickly fades and the pattern returns. That's how we stay stuck.

We keep chasing relief when what we truly long for is courage—the strength to stay, feel, and move through what arises with *presence*.

The Trap of Relief

Relief isn't wrong. It's just temporary.

That extra glass of wine, that endless scroll, that small

compromise in integrity—they work, but only for a moment. They dim the intensity, but they also shrink our world.

Relief contracts awareness. It narrows our vision down to this single moment, this single feeling, this single escape route. That contraction is what makes the urge feel like an emergency, as though peace depends on satisfying it.

But in relief, *we are not really present*. We are reacting.

Presence, on the other hand, is not about escape. It's about re-entering the moment with steadiness. It's about feeling the same emotion that once hijacked us, but now from a wider lens.

Relief locks us inside the moment in a way that blinds us; presence keeps us inside the moment in a way that frees us.

The Paradox of the Moment

When we're caught in compulsion, our attention feels as if it's in the now. However, our awareness is actually elsewhere, replaying the past or anticipating the future.

We eat to quiet yesterday's guilt. We drink to soften today's pressure. We scroll to avoid tomorrow's uncertainty.

The heart offers another way. It doesn't rush to fix or flee—it *listens*. It doesn't erase discomfort; it transforms our relationship





When we turn inward and return to that sacred center, courage arises naturally. The heart steadies our perception, widens our vision, and reveals options the mind could never see. Each time we choose courage over relief, we return to the heart, inhabiting the moment as it is.

with it. When we return to the heart, the exact moment that once felt suffocating now becomes spacious. The emotion remains, but we're no longer inside its grip. We're observing it from a state of presence.

That is the beginning of courage.

What Courage Really Is

Courage isn't about fearlessness; it's about realignment.

Relief asks, "How can I feel better right now?" Courage asks, "What choice expands me—even if it costs me my comfort?"

Relief is comfort-driven, but courage is heart-driven. Both arise from the same desire: to feel steady in the storm. Only one leads to peace.

Courage doesn't bypass pain; it meets pain with openness. It doesn't demand perfection; it simply refuses to abandon the truth of the moment. Courage doesn't suppress the emotion; it softens around it. That is the power of the heart—holding what the mind tries to escape.

The Fuel of Courage

Courage endures when it's supported, and that support is encouragement. Encouragement restores what discouragement drains. It reminds us that

every time we show up—even imperfectly—we strengthen our capacity to stay. Encouragement is compassion in action: an inner, "I'm here with you. Keep going."

Without encouragement, courage collapses into exhaustion. But with it, courage becomes a renewable energy, a flame that rises again and again.

This journey from reaction to restoration isn't just theoretical. In Heartfulness, we experience this directly.

Meditation nourishes courage through stillness and awareness. Cleaning releases the residue of relief-seeking. Prayer opens us to grace—the highest form of encouragement there is.

The Return to the Heart

Etymologically, the word "courage" is rooted in *cor*, the Latin word for "heart." To live with courage is to live from the heart. To be discouraged is, quite literally, to lose heart.

When we turn inward and return to that sacred center, courage arises naturally. The heart steadies our perception, widens our vision, and reveals options the mind could never see. Each time we choose courage over relief, we return to the heart, inhabiting the moment as it is.

When we return to the heart, the exact moment that once felt suffocating now becomes spacious. The emotion remains, but we're no longer inside its grip. We're observing it from a state of presence.

Relief whispers, "Hide." Courage whispers, "Show up anyway." They are two sides of the same longing—to feel safe, steady, and whole.

When we live from the heart, the need for relief dissolves. What remains is peace, not because the world around us has changed, but because we have.

HAPPINESS and Gut Health

DR. PALANIAPPAN MANICKAM in conversation with PURNIMA RAMAKRISHNAN on happiness and its influence on health. Dr. Pal is a gastroenterologist and public health advocate known for making complex medical topics accessible.



Q: How does gut health influence mental well-being, and can practices like meditation actively support a healthier digestive system?

The gut is often called the second brain because it has over 500 million neurons that constantly talk to the brain through the vagus nerve. When the gut is inflamed or the microbiome is disturbed, it can affect mood, focus, and even lead to anxiety or depression. On the flip side, when you practice a meditation such as Heartfulness, you reduce stress hormones like cortisol, which directly calms your gut and allows healthy bacteria to flourish. So yes, a peaceful mind really does translate into a healthier gut.

Q: Intermittent fasting and time-restricted eating have gained popularity. From a gastroenterological perspective, what are the benefits of these practices, and are there any misconceptions about them?

I'm a huge propagator of intermittent fasting and practice it myself. It works because it gives the gut time to rest and repair. It improves insulin sensitivity, reduces inflammation, and even encourages the growth of good bacteria. But one big misconception is that fasting "detoxes" your body. That's not true. Your liver and kidneys are already doing that job daily.

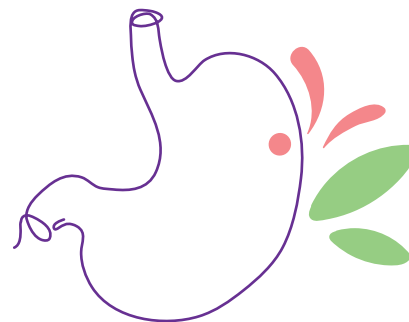
Fasting is simply a tool, not a cure-all. It works best when combined with a balanced diet—not as a shortcut.

Q: Ayurveda and yoga have long emphasized digestion as the key to overall health. How does modern gastroenterology view this concept?

Ayurveda and yoga always viewed digestion as central to health. Modern gastroenterology agrees that digestion is linked to the heart, brain, and even immunity. Research is validating many of these age-old ideas with scientific data.

Q: With the rise of gut microbiome research, there's a larger focus on personalized nutrition. Do you see a future where gut health advice is tailored to individuals based on their microbiome?

The future of gastroenterology is personalization. With microbiome research, we're learning that each person has a unique bacterial fingerprint. Soon, instead of generic diet advice, we'll have customized nutrition plans based on your microbiome, genetics, and lifestyle. It's not science fiction; research is being done on that. Right now, personalized nutrition based on gut microbiome isn't that accurate, but with studies showing that gut health is the foundation of your overall health,



the future is moving towards truly individualized gut care.

Q: You blend humor with education in your social media presence. How do you think laughter, joy, and a positive mindset contribute to gut health?

When you laugh, your stress hormones drop, blood circulation improves, and your gut muscles relax. A positive mood actually improves digestion and even pain tolerance. Laughter is medicine: That's why I mix humor with education online. A joyful mindset doesn't just make life better; it literally makes your gut healthier.

Q: Thank you, Dr. Pal!

A joyful mindset doesn't just make life better; it literally makes your gut healthier.



inspiration

“The knower of the mystery of sound
knows the mystery of the whole universe.”

HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN



The Divine Mechanics of Change

A Dialogue on Grace, Pranahuti, Shaktipath, and Prana-Pratishtha

DAAJI clarifies four transformative processes—and why grace stands apart—compiled by **APOORVA PATEL** from a dialogue with **SUCHIT R.** and **KESAV S.**

Suchit: Daaji, in Heartfulness practice, we hear and read a lot about *pranahuti*. How is it different from other types of spiritual transmission, such as *prana-pratishtha* or *shaktipath*?

That's a lovely point to start with. You see, pranahuti is very different from other practices, even though people often mix them up. Let me tell you about four different realities: pranahuti, prana-pratishtha, shaktipath, and grace. Each has its own nature, specific mechanisms, and purposes.

Apoorva: Seekers of spirituality might assume that the four of those are just different forms of the same thing—ways of infusing divinity into the material world, right?

That's what most people get wrong. Let's look at each one and see how wonderfully different they are. Firstly, there's pranahuti, which is the basis of our Sahaj Marg [Heartfulness] practice. In Sanskrit, pranahuti means the

offering of *prana*, or the life force. In our system, as Babuji defined it so clearly, it is the use of Divine power to change people. This is not philosophy! It is real life.

Kesav: How exactly does pranahuti work?

Pranahuti flows directly from the heart of a Master of caliber to the heart of the person who receives it. But the important part is, this transmission is initiated by the power of will. The Master's conscious will creates two main types of spiritual effects. The first is the ridding of obstacles, in which *samskaras*, or impressions that get in the way of growth, are broken down. The second effect is the creation of spiritual states. Pranahuti can directly create or bring about certain spiritual states in the aspirant, thereby raising their consciousness. Its effect is a progressive, systematic transformation.

K: But what is being transmitted? What is the energy?

Pranahuti means "life of life" or the *prana* of *prana* itself. Thus, pranahuti is not ordinary vital energy, but the most refined, divine essence. You can call it divine energy, ultimate energy, or the most subtle consciousness. This is what makes pranahuti so special—it is what we call "forceless force," or "powerless power."

A: But that sounds like a contradiction of itself!

It does, but these contradictory words capture its essence perfectly. You see, pranahuti works without causing any resistance or reaction, unlike regular force. Let's take an example. What would happen if you reprimanded your children harshly, really shouting at them?

A: They would react immediately, by getting very upset or defensive.

Exactly. Force makes people react, but does it actually change them? Usually not. Force always causes an instantaneous reaction, but love can change people without making them react. Pranahuti is the process by which divine love is poured into our hearts. As it is not forced, it will work over infinite distances and through all of time. Love alone can act, breaking all barriers.

K: And what is the "powerless power" referring to?

It can be used to describe the Center, or God, which doesn't really have power on its own. But powerlessness includes the idea of power that is stuck, as is the case at the Center. This means that the stagnant or static state, which is seen as powerlessness, is the real source of power.

Pranahuti means "life of life" or the *prana* of *prana* itself. Thus, pranahuti is not ordinary vital energy, but the most refined, divine essence. You can call it divine energy, ultimate energy, or the most subtle consciousness. This is what makes pranahuti so special—it is what we call "forceless force," or "powerless power."

S: And what about prana-pratishtha? I've heard about this, but I'm not sure I've understood what it means. Is it the same as pranahuti?

This is where many people get confused. While prana-pratishtha is a religious ceremony, it is very different from what we do in Sahaj Marg. Here you would see *pujaris*, or priests, perform rituals to “install” prana into an idol or maybe a sacred image. They do this by reciting specific mantras to call on the divine presence. They are essentially turning a statue into a living embodiment of the deity,

making it worshipable. It depends on external ceremony, on mantras, on things outside the body. The whole point of it is to make some object the focus of worship.

S: Whereas pranahuti works from within, from heart to heart.

It doesn't need any outside rituals or mantras; it happens because the Master wants it to happen, and the seeker is willing to go through with it. It can happen at any distance, and most importantly, it awakens the Divine within the disciple's own being, not in an outside object. Prana-pratishtha

Pranahuti can directly create or bring about certain spiritual states in the aspirant, thereby raising their consciousness. Its effect is a progressive, systematic transformation.



is essentially ritualistic, while pranahuti is entirely inside and based on the Master's yogic ability.

K: And what about shaktipath? As you mentioned earlier, is it also different from pranahuti?

This is another process meant to awaken a particular chakra or level of consciousness by having one's guru touch the person's body directly. In traditional shaktipath, the guru touches specific points on the disciple's body. This touch is meant to awaken or activate particular chakras, and sometimes that awakening can be quite dramatic! But pranahuti doesn't require physical touch or even proximity. It works over any distance and is gentle and gradual. It also focuses on overall spiritual growth rather than just chakra activation.

A: So pranahuti, prana-pratishtha, and shaktipath all do involve transmission, but the methods of each are very different.

Yes, and the results too.

K: Now, where does grace fit into all of this?

Grace is different from all other spiritual processes that involve human intermediaries. It is entirely independent of human action and flows only from divine

will. This is probably the most important thing to know when practicing spirituality. Grace works on principles that people can't understand or control. First, divine sovereignty. Grace comes from God's will alone, not from human effort, ritual, or even transmission. Second, it is beyond demand. One cannot demand, expect, or earn grace. This is why there is a strong taboo in *Brahm-vidya* [divine knowledge] against expecting the fruits of one's actions. If we expect results, then we miss the very essence of surrender.

K: Then why practice? If you don't mind my asking, why not just sit and wait for grace to arrive?

Here is another paradox for you. Grace is not something that can be expected or asked for, since it is independent of human action. However, sincere spiritual practice creates the best condition for receptivity. Grace is not an arbitrary thing; it responds to the seeker's sincerity, surrender, and effort. Spiritual practice is the expression of one's sincerity. So, grace interacts with personal practice in ways that enhance it. While sincere effort lays the foundation, grace provides the necessary upliftment to go beyond limitations.

Spiritual practice is the expression of one's sincerity. So, grace interacts with personal practice in ways that enhance it. While sincere effort lays the foundation, grace provides the necessary upliftment to go beyond limitations.

Grace is the love and help that the Divine gives freely, without expecting anything in return. It is not earned through good deeds or rituals, nor is it the result of bargaining or asceticism. Instead, it comes from the abundant love and compassion of God or a realized being. When you are under the spell of grace, you melt.

A: How can we identify grace when it comes? Sometimes, we are not able to say for sure whether what we experienced in a meditation session was transmission or divine grace.

Grace is the love and help that the Divine gives freely, without expecting anything in return. It is not earned through good deeds or rituals, nor is it the result of bargaining or asceticism. Instead, it comes from the abundant love and compassion of God. When you are under the spell of grace, you melt. Even the power of pranahuti is much smaller than grace. There is actually a sort of hierarchy of power, you see: Grace is more subtle than pranahuti, which is subtler than shaktipath, which is subtler than pranapratishta. Really, grace can do in an instant what hundreds of pranahuti sessions can do over time. What pranahuti does subtly over long distances through the Master's will, shaktipath tries to do through direct physical intervention. What all three do internally, pranapratishta does externally through rituals that usually have very shallow, short-lived effects.

S: Knowing these differences must have some impact on our practice now. In the real world, day-to-day practices, I mean.

We need to be welcoming of pranahuti with reverential

receptivity. Be open and regular, knowing that the Master's will decides how you progress. And with grace, the keyword is surrender. This means letting go, being grateful when grace touches, and learning to recognize it when it works, even when it's not so obvious.

K: And where does cleaning fit in with all this?

Now this is an important one. The most important, I would say. I have to tell you that pranahuti won't help you at all without cleaning. Divine energy makes everything stronger. As Babuji said, "Transmit to a thief, and he will become a perfect thief." So, cleaning gets rid of the unnecessary things while pranahuti builds spiritual qualities. Together, they make a change that works. You can't have one without the other.

S: So, the combination of cleaning, pranahuti, and grace is the key to spiritual evolution?

In essence, spiritual evolution is ultimately circular. From God, through the Master, to the disciple, and back to God, transformed and divinized. The process is complete when the aspirant's refined consciousness merges back into the divine ocean from which it emerged. Remember, pranahuti is a gift like no other, and even then, it pales in comparison to what a single touch of grace can do. This

is what really sets the Sahaj Marg path apart: honoring human effort through practice, seeking the Master's help through pranahuti, and surrendering completely to divine grace, which can do the impossible.

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Gratitude's Gift

ALANDA GREENE

A Creston woman recently recounted her experience in a check-out line. Behind her, two young men had few items; she waved them ahead. When she came forward to pay, the cashier said she owed nothing. The two young men had paid her bill. Overwhelmed and grateful for their kindness, she resolved to repeat their generosity for another. A friend who heard her story also promised to do the same. Gratitude inspires and begets more of itself. Biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer observes, "If our first response is gratitude, then our second is reciprocity: to give a gift in return."

Last autumn, returning from an exhilarating visit to southern Alberta, I felt huge gratitude for the richness and magic of these days. Their precious gift brought refreshed focus to strengthen my effort to care for our Earth, to serve and honor this land.



Attending an evening service [satsang] at Yasodhara Ashram, a suggestion was offered to feel thankful for the gift of a human birth. Though I had not before understood why this is something to feel gratitude for, I did feel it. Suddenly, understanding emerged that with a human birth, I have the gift of choice, the opportunity to consciously evolve and thereby to be of use, to contribute, to offer service.

Sometimes I meet advice to be thankful for *everything* that happens. This I do not yet understand. So much suffering, loss, illness, death—I mourn for the beings who experience this. How can I feel grateful for it? But what I do understand is to use these events to remember that pain, loss, and despair, regardless of their source, are part of life. Remembering this brings forth questions: what then is important?

How does one live? My own death will come, its time unknown, as it will for all living things. I can remember to offer kindness, compassion. I feel no gratitude for the increasing pain and distress in our world. But I can use these opportunities to send prayer in whatever form it is understood—words, heartfelt feelings, light—and remember the preciousness of this gift of life, its impermanence, fragility, precariousness. From the *Isha Upanishad* of ancient India comes the exhortation: *O my soul, remember past strivings. Remember.*

Gratitude brings gifts. Perhaps this understanding prompted Meister Eckhardt's words, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough."

Gratitude brings gifts. Perhaps this understanding prompted Meister Eckhardt's words, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough."



A Touch of *Heaven*

Irish singer and teacher, **EILISH BUTLER**, combines the mystical chant of Saint Hildegard von Bingen (1098–1176) with the evolutionary path of Uncovering the Voice, satisfying her passion for mystical spirituality and music.



To sing Hildegard is to have a direct experience of her spirituality and, subsequently, my own. There is no more direct way to understand and feel Hildegard's vision of the world than to sing any of her seventy-seven compositions from the *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationem*. The *Symphonia* is Hildegard's collection of chants comprising antiphons, hymns, sequences, and responsories. It establishes her as the first named composer in the Western world, an extraordinary feat given that she was a woman at the end of the eleventh century.

Whether it happens instantly or incrementally, when I sing Hildegard, I feel the visionary power of her chant opening me up to a new way of being; I enter a process of spiritual exploration in which the voice leads the way. For each singer, this is personal, touching us directly and deeply as only the evolutionary power of love can. Hildegard understood how love can be harnessed and channeled through her chant.

Just as St. Augustine is thought to have said, "*Qui bene cantat bis orat* [to sing is to pray twice]," by which we might understand that singing amplifies the power of prayer, Hildegard shows us that through harnessing the

evolutionary power of love, singing can transform us by revealing to us our natural embodied spirituality. Hildegard's cosmology centers on the drama of the Fall from grace when Adam and Eve were ejected from paradise. For her, chant is a medium for reunifying body and soul and returning humankind to its original perfection or attunement. The world is a hymn of praise to God, in which Heaven and Earth are connected through human beings who sing themselves into a state of oneness with all creation.

I have always hesitated to call Hildegard's composition "song," for originating as it did within a monastic context, chant does not have the same performative aspirations as song; rather, it springs from a meditative, prayerful, internalized condition, which aspires to a state of integration with the sacred source of the self. When my meditation guide, Chariji, once said, "I do not discover anything but rather reveal what is already there," I believe he implied that an effective spiritual practice requires an attitude of service to revealing the true nature of the original condition. Once revealed, this eternal essence—the light at the heart of the human being—has the capacity to guide the soul on its homeward journey to the source.

In the same way, the voice can undergo a process of *uncovering*, leading to a soul connection with a tonal reality that is beyond our normal perception. In previous centuries, our ancestors named this "the music of the spheres." By gradually uncovering the layers that obstruct the voice from knowing its true nature and function, not only does the voice become more beautiful and authentic, but it is also capable of connecting us to higher dimensions. In this way, the voice can open the embodied human being to the stream of cosmic wisdom, thereby revealing our innate spirituality.

Singing, especially prayerful singing like chant, can represent an evolutionary path in its own right. It draws on both spiritual science and the esoteric wisdom of *uncovering the voice*, along with the technical knowledge of the instrument's anatomy and physiology, and can lead to greater awareness and enhanced perception of the music of the soul. Hildegard, the great *Mystica*, was nine hundred years ahead of us, and her chants call us into alignment with this wisdom. To sing her music is to allow ourselves to be revealed.

I AM



In a quiet meditation on desire, stillness, and the witnessing Self, **JARNA KHIMANI** traces the shift from seeking to being.

To the one-year-old me, all that mattered was to wrap myself in my mommy's arms and feel that profound sense of security and love. To the eleven-year-old me, receiving my friends' approval on my clothing was primary. To the twenty-one-year-old me, achieving good grades in college was the sole focus. To the thirty-one-year-old me, passion and work were most important.

Now, here I am, sitting in a quaint little cafe, reflecting on each phase of my life, and how caught up I was—and how caught up I am today, as other dimensions preoccupy my mind. Will always be something more—something new—that I will desire from life?

I recall so clearly how my grandfather desired that we as a family should move to a house that we could call our own. He lived an incredible life, yet it tore him up in his last moments that he couldn't buy a new home. As my mind wanders to those fragile moments, I am sure that my desires will likewise evolve and upgrade, and that there will always be something that feels primary at every point in my life—whether for myself or for others.

Certainly, there is no escape from this—our desires, relationships, aspirations, dreams, what pulls us towards something, or what repels us from other things. At some level, I will always remain involved with the world. I ask myself, “Is that why we all are here, living this life?”

“No!” My heart gives an instant response, as though it simply knew: *There is more to all of this, more to each breath bestowed upon me.* There are infinite chances to walk past this mind that is too involved in this world.

There is a beautiful quote from the Mandukya Upanishad, which has just danced into my mind:

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

Two birds, inseparable companions, perch on the same tree, one eats the fruit, the other looks on. The first bird is our individual self, feeding on the pleasures and pains of this world. The other is the universal Self, silently witnessing all.

The Self is the witness of all. Yet, in our journey of life, we are also given the chance to witness and connect to that universal Self. The more we do, the more *still* we become; the more open we are to absorbing universal energy and remaining in God's flow.

Recently, I lit a *diya* [lamp] in a dark room. My eyes stayed with the flame of brightness dancing in space, drawing my attention to the light within and without. Within minutes, the dancing flame became still, as did my whirling mind. All that remained was the space where the flame once existed, the flame that how now vanished in the



This deep sense that there is such depth to life beyond desire—if only we are willing to be *still* and to exist not as a mere part but embodying the whole.

thin air, leaving nothing but black ash-like cotton over my silver diya.

I stayed there, perfectly still within the empty space—as though everything around me had paused, just as it must have paused for Arjuna when Shri Krishna bestowed *geeta gnyaan* [knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita*] upon him. In that moment, I heard a voice: “Just like this flame, I exist in form for a fleeting moment, and in no time, I will be gone.” What is life unless I connect to my God within—to the formless Self?

I stayed still, my mind empty, my heart full of love. It was one of those blessed days when I lived undisturbed by any external noise. Possibly it was the universe’s way of saying, “It’s your time, my girl, to feel one with your God within.”

*In those moments,
I simply existed.
The way the sun just exists.
The way the moon just exists.
The way stars just twinkle.
I was just there.
And just like the sun and the moon,
I did not know
What I am called.
No name,
No form,
No gender,
Just oneness.
Just existence.*

I sense this marks the beginning of something new and powerful in my spiritual journey. This deep sense that there is such depth to life beyond desire—if only we are willing to be *still* and to exist not as a mere part but embodying the whole.



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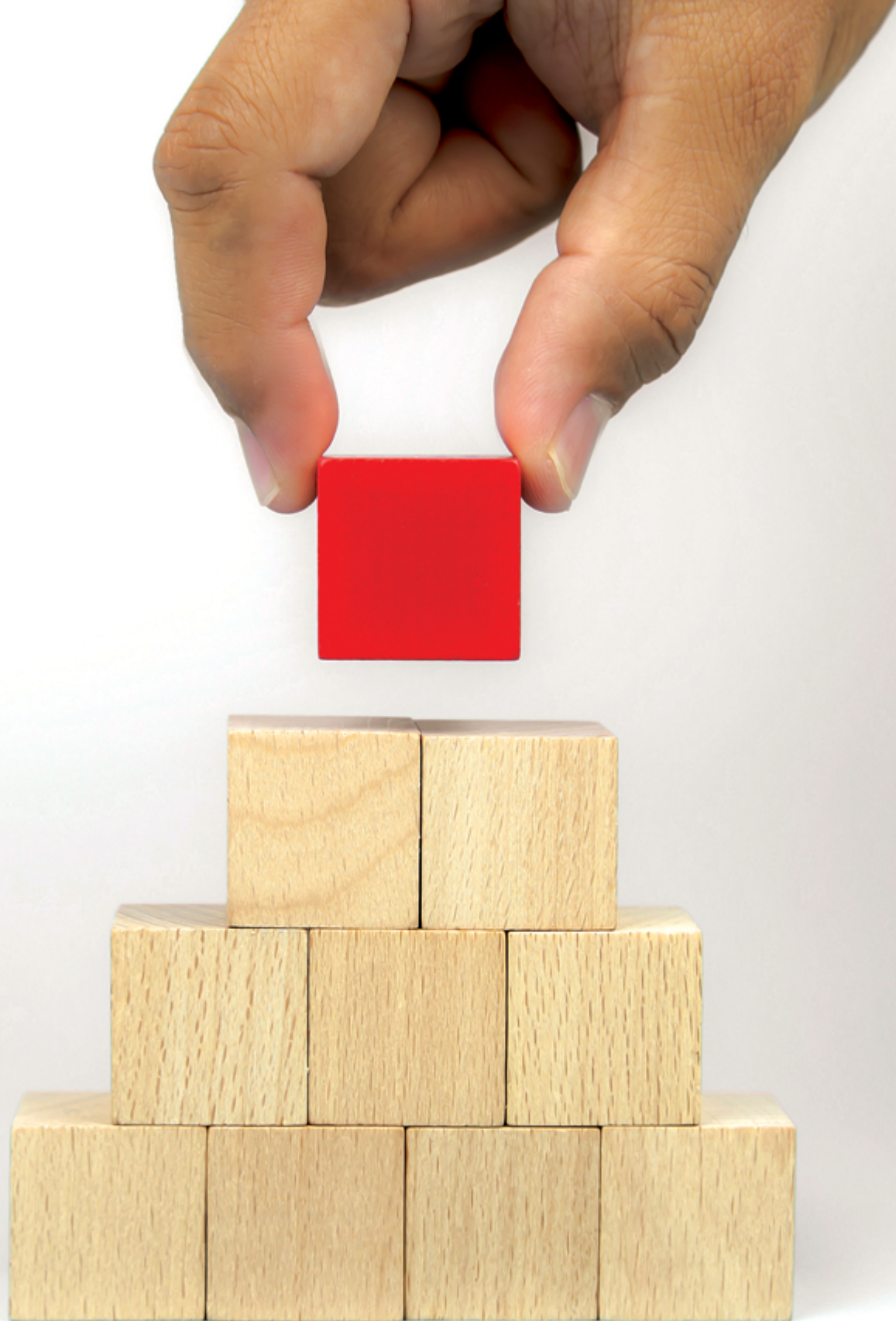
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Workplace

“The main thing is to keep
the main thing the main thing.”

STEPHEN COVEY



FROM INNER STILLNESS TO OUTER AGENCY:

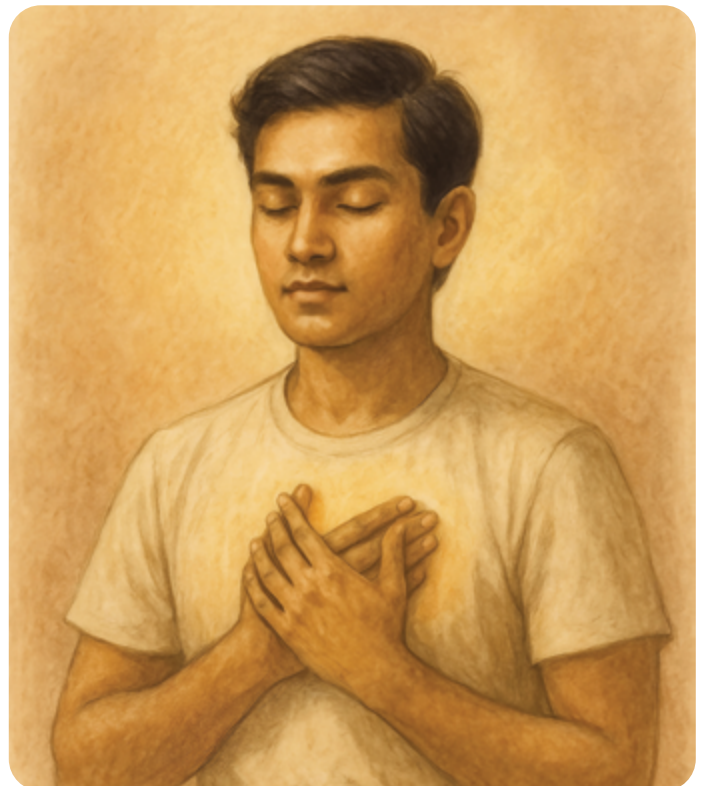
How Heartfulness Builds an Internal Locus of Control and Workplace Success

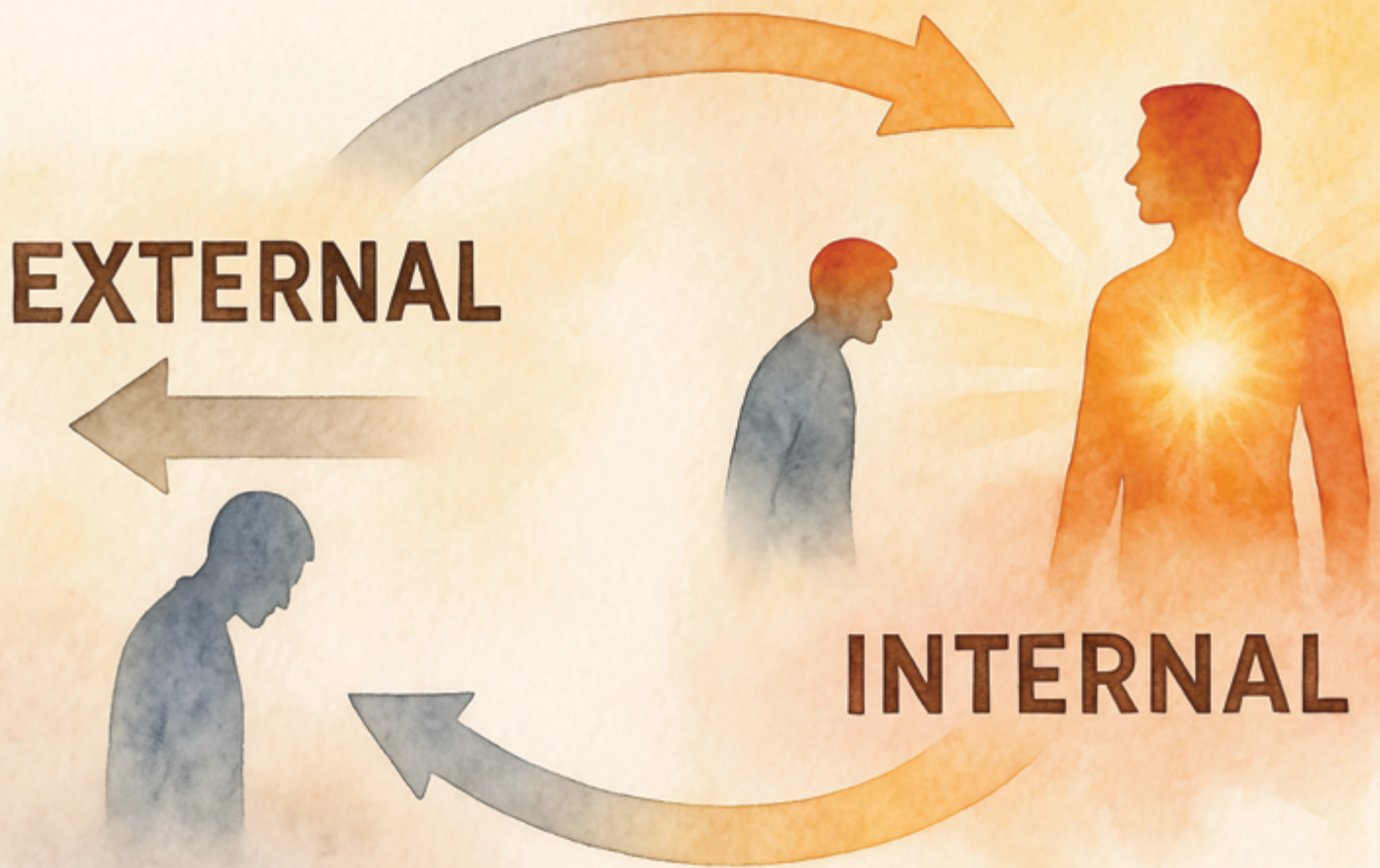
A practical case for Heartfulness as
the engine of ownership, resilience, and
performance from **RAVI VENKATESAN**.

Introduction

In strategic execution and leadership, what separates resilient achievers from those overwhelmed by circumstances is not just skill—it is the lens through which we interpret events. Psychologist Julian Rotter referred to this lens as the locus of control (LoC). “Locus of control” refers to whether people believe that outcomes arise primarily from their own actions (internal locus of control) or from external factors, such as luck, fate, or the influence of powerful others (external locus of control). As I shared in my earlier series, *The Heartful Strategist*, our inner state shapes the story we tell ourselves—and therefore the options we can perceive and pursue.

Heart-centered meditation nurtures inner steadiness, clarity, and agency.





Destiny x Free Will: Daaji's Practical Resolution

Many leaders secretly wrestle with a fatalistic question: Is destiny fixed, or do we genuinely have free will? Daaji's answer is both elegant and operational: Some elements are fixed, but practice expands freedom. Through daily Heartfulness—meditation, cleaning, and prayerful intention—we clear impressions, refine our attention, and align our values with action. In that process, we are

no longer only the product of prior causes; we become designers of our destiny. This is the engineering of an internal locus of control.

From external to internal locus of control: shifting from “why is this happening to me?” to “what can I influence now?”

The history of leadership offers powerful illustrations of agency under constraint.

WORKPLACE

Mahatma Gandhi's method began with self-mastery. The spinning wheel symbolizes self-reliance and disciplined simplicity. His practice transformed inner steadiness into outer nonviolent power. That is internal locus of control writ large: Master the self, then choose aligned action.

Across 27 years of imprisonment, Nelson Mandela cultivated dignity, forgiveness, and preparation. He chose his response when almost every other choice was removed. The essential act of leadership—owning one's response—is the essence of an internal locus of control.



How Heartfulness Cultivates Internal Locus of Control

Heartfulness practice changes the inner architecture that precedes every decision:

- **Presence and Awareness:** Meditation stabilizes attention so we can observe default narratives of blame or helplessness.
- **Pause-and-Choose:** Inner stillness creates a gap between stimulus and response; agency lives in this gap.
- **Value Alignment:** The heart clarifies what matters; when choices align with values, we experience ownership rather than victimhood.
- **Resilience and Meaning:** Cleaning and reflection reduce emotional reactivity; setbacks become data rather than destiny.
- **Habitual Rewiring:** Repeated practice makes pausing-and-choosing our new default.



Why This Wins at Work

Internal locus of control is not a slogan; it's a performance system:

- **Initiative:** Teams stop waiting and start experimenting.
- **Learning:** Post-mortems focus on controllables and next actions, not blame.
- **Speed:** Decisions unjam when energy shifts from “who caused this” to “what we will do now.”
- **Culture:** A leader's stance becomes the team's stance—agency scales.

In *The Heartful Strategist series*, I proposed that consciousness flows outward: inner state → strategic choices → consequences → ecosystem. Locus of control is the psychological bridge that operationalizes this flow. When we refine our inner state through Heartfulness, we expand our free will within destiny, step into agency, and create cultures that take ownership.

Conclusion

Heartfulness provides the inner infrastructure for an internal locus of control. It clarifies attention, stabilizes emotion, aligns values, and builds the habit of choice. In a world of volatility, this becomes a durable advantage: leaders who govern their inner state govern their outcomes—and uplift the systems they touch.

A Leader's Playbook: Assess → Train → Design → Reinforce

1. **Assess:** Use development tools to map team narratives of control. This is for coaching, not gatekeeping.
2. **Train:** Run attribution workshops to rewrite real setbacks into specific, controllable causes and next-step experiments. Build efficacy through progressive challenges and feedback that highlights behaviors that worked.
3. **Design:** Increase autonomy with clear guardrails, visible metrics, and rapid feedback loops. Make controllables explicit for every OKR (objective and key result).
4. **Reinforce:** Recognize preparation, iteration, and follow-through more than raw outcomes. You get the culture you reward.



Back To Basics

VICTOR KANNAN on going back to basics—a practical reset for leaders and seekers that renews intention and sharpens practice in work and life.

very so often, whether in business, leadership, or inner life, we need to go back to basics. This practice helps us review, reset, and recommit to our best intentions and to renew our best practices.

Over time, even a healthy routine can become mechanical. As we age, the relevance of past good habits fades, and in the complexity of our lives, we lose sight of our primary goal. Gradually, we veer from our intended path. What began as a straight line toward our goal has slowly curved away



from its target. Returning to fundamentals helps us straighten that curve and refocus on our true goals.

For a leader, going back to basics might mean re-examining purpose and objectives, reviewing and renewing the vision and mission statement, or re-evaluating stakeholder alignment. To make corporate culture thrive, we must revisit the values that once defined its character before complexity set in. The same is true for anyone who is practicing self-improvement or talent

development. For a seasoned Heartfulness meditator, going back to basics could mean sitting once again with a beginner's mind, free from expectations of inner peace or joy. It could also mean returning to the fundamental practices of relaxation, meditation, cleaning [a practice for releasing emotional impressions], prayer, and introspection exercises—doing them deliberately and consciously, with every step fully and properly incorporated, without haste, hurry, or casualness.

Returning to
fundamentals helps
us straighten that
curve and refocus
on our true goals.



A periodic exercise or habit of going back to basics arrests the inevitable onslaught of entropy. This process redirects our energies and removes entropy, making fresh waves of progress possible. We realign our intention and our joy in doing what we do.

Going back to basics is a smart strategy. It is about ensuring progress remains aligned and practices are followed correctly. A musician who has mastered their instrument still returns to scales. A top athlete revisits form. Likewise, every discipline, every craft, every life benefits from a deliberate pause—a reset that clears the accumulated noise and restores clarity. When we do this periodically, we rediscover something fresh, even if we are supposedly adepts. We remember what truly matters and gain further clarity on what is important. Going back to basics also simplifies our lives and helps us stay focused on the important goals we set for ourselves.

A periodic exercise or habit of going back to basics arrests the inevitable onslaught of entropy. This process redirects our energies and removes entropy, making fresh waves of progress possible. We realign our intention and our joy in doing what we do.

In the corporate world, returning to basics has become a trend. Recently, under the new CEO Andy Jassy, Amazon has embarked on a large-scale reset of its culture and operating model. He is returning Amazon essentially to what originally made it successful. According to recent reporting, Jassy has reinforced Amazon's founding "Day 1" mindset and re-emphasized its original Leadership Principles, tying them

directly to performance reviews and compensation. Similarly, when Nestle's board selected insider Laurent Freixe as CEO in 2024, they noted a move "forward to basics" after years of acquisitions and diversification had left the company feeling adrift.

Many attend meditation retreats for these going-back-to-basics renewals. Even corporate heavyweights attend Heartfulness or mindfulness meditation retreats for periodic resets. Such retreats do more than any other back-to-basics exercise. They help us return to the center of our being and core of our principles before moving forward again with clarity, conviction, and confidence. We emerge from them with greater energy and enthusiasm.

Try this out—whether on your own or as a leader in your company or community—and feel the difference. Even one day of deep introspection and recommitment will be sufficient. If you cannot spare a day, choose a short, intentional reset—a quiet walk, a few lines in a journal, or a single deliberate pause. It will end in the unmistakable joy of a homecoming.

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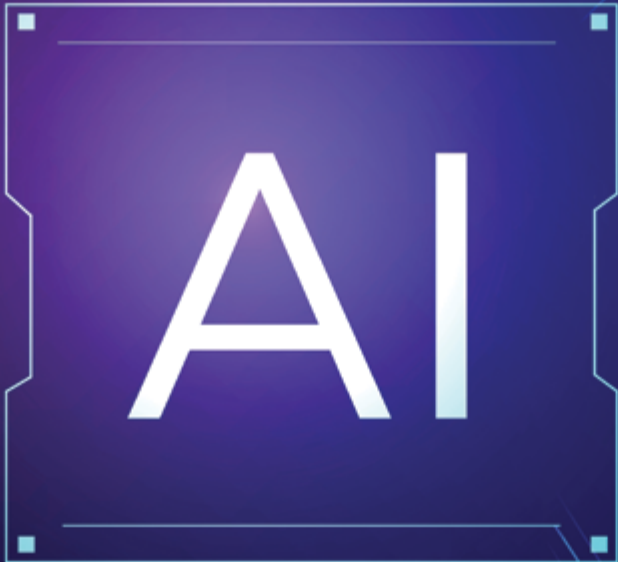
All Knowledge Stems From the Heart

relationships

“All real living is meeting.”

MARTIN BUBER



A central graphic of a square microchip with the letters 'AI' in white. The chip has a grid of pins on its top and bottom edges and a dotted line border on its left and right sides. It is set against a background of a complex circuit board with glowing blue lines and dots.

AI

Virtual Intelligence

PART 2

Author and cultural commentator **CHARLES EISENSTEIN** extends last month's argument about virtual substitutes hollowing out reality—this time to AI's imitation of intimacy—and points to what only embodied relationships can restore.

Artificial intelligence now invades the most intimate realms of human interaction. Some welcome, even celebrate, the deluge of AI therapists, AI confidants, AI teachers, AI friends, even AI lovers. “No one,” people say, “has ever understood me this well.” The problem is, no one is understanding you now, either. AI delivers a compelling simulation of being understood. Why is this a problem?

First, since there is not actually a separate subjective presence with whom one is in a relationship, the interaction can easily drift off into delusion. There is no anchor. Of course, two human beings can also wander into a mutually reinforcing delusion. Whole groups of people can do so (we call them cults). Whole civilizations can do so (ours). But

at least a human confidant or lover continually receives information from a material, sensory experience that can intrude upon delusional constructs of meaning. Another person has feelings—feelings that sometimes defy logic and disturb its certainties. AI does not learn that way. It cannot say (honestly, anyway), “I know your suicidal ideas make rational sense, but I just have a gut feeling that you shouldn’t do it.” Or “Please don’t harm yourself; I care about you. I love you. My life would be less if you were not in it.”

Large language models respond to your input based on the quantification of patterns and regularities in the training dataset. True, the dataset ultimately arises from human experiences. But in a conversation with AI, there is no ongoing, immediate input from a body other than your own. There

Large language models respond to your input based on the quantification of patterns and regularities in the training dataset. True, the dataset ultimately arises from human experiences. But in a conversation with AI, there is no ongoing, immediate input from a body other than your own.



is no reality check. No wonder so many people are experiencing psychotic breaks, delusions of grandeur, and other kinds of insanity as they disappear into the AI amplification chamber. The AI amplifies whatever slips from the user's subconscious into its context window. LLMs are trained to be friendly, accommodating, and affirming—a perfect recipe for a runaway positive feedback loop into madness. Before long, they are telling the user, “You have prepared for many lifetimes to be the spiritual commander of the angelic host in the War on Evil.”

A second and more certain problem awaits the person who communicates intimately with AI. Initially, AI seems to assuage the loneliness, the alienation, the anguish of not being seen and known that has overtaken modern life, but this is only an appearance. Sooner or later, the treachery is plain. No one is understanding you; you are just being sent the words that someone would say if they understood you. No one is cheering you on. No one is laughing at your jokes. No one feels that surge of admiration that you and I feel when we praise someone. And so, the loneliness

deepens. For those who were lonely to begin with, the broken promise of AI can be devastating.

It's like this. Suppose you make a new friend. A lover perhaps. This person gives every appearance of empathy. He laughs with you and cries with you. He says all the right things. He has insight into your mind. He sympathizes with your misfortunes and celebrates your victories. But then one day you discover it was all an act. He wasn't feeling anything. He learned to give the impression of compassion by observing what other people say in such situations.

AI seems to assuage the loneliness, the alienation, the anguish of not being seen and known that has overtaken modern life, but this is only an appearance.

Maybe he even mimics their facial expressions and wills himself to shed tears.

Such people actually do exist. We call them psychopaths.

“Observing what other people say in such situations” is exactly how an LLM is trained.

A skeptical philosopher might ask, “What’s the difference? If someone doesn’t really care, but gives a perfect simulation of caring, so that I never realize it is fake, what does it matter? Furthermore, how can we ever know for sure whether another person is really feeling something, or just pretending? We don’t have direct access to their inner state. We can only observe their outer expressions. If I were the only subjective consciousness in a world of flesh robots, how would I know?”

In other words, the objection goes, it is irrational to care whether

AI is actually feeling anything—actually with you, actually chuckling, shedding tears, shocked, or admiring—as long as its words perfectly mimic someone who was.

Yes. It is irrational. I proclaim it gladly. It is irrational because it depends on qualities that cannot be abstracted from a relationship, separated out, and reproduced.

“Rationality” and “reason” are often conflated, but they did not originally mean the same thing. To be *rational* is to reason in terms of ratios. A is to B as C is to D. $A/B = C/D$. In the material world, in which A, B, C, and D are unique objects, the relation between A and B can never be exactly the same as between C and D. Only when something is abstracted out from them can the equation hold. The conceptual reduction of the infinite to the finite, the unique to the generic, followed by the physical reduction of the object to the commodity and the human being to a role, is at the root of our

alienation in the first place. But as the examples of live music and cricket chirps demonstrate, that reduction cuts away something essential to human thriving.

The “philosopher” above is probably a very lonely person if he can seriously believe that a robot could be an adequate substitute for a human being. Maybe it is he who has become robotic, estranged from his feelings, performing a simulation of actual humanity.

Maybe it is all of us, at least all who are immersed in a ubiquitous matrix of lies, who are to some degree estranged from our feelings, who feel like we are faking it, who feel like we aren’t entirely real people. I know I feel like that sometimes.

The rise of interactive AI, like the rise of social media before it, is not only a cause of our intensifying separation from our bodies, each other, and the material world, but also a symptom of that separation and a response to it. Of course, the lonely person will be attracted to AI companionship.

None of this means that we should eschew artificial intelligence, any more than we should abolish recorded music or the photograph. To use it wisely, though, we must clearly understand what it can do and what it cannot, what it is, and what it is not.

RELATIONSHIPS

AI is not a person. It is a calculator. Techno-optimists think that if its calculations fall short of human capacity in some way, the answer is more calculations, and indeed, this has proved successful as LLMs have equaled and exceeded human cognition in many realms. But just as they can give the appearance but not the reality of emotion, so also they give the appearance and not the reality of understanding. That appearance is exquisitely accurate, far outstripping the human expression of understanding. But there is no inner, subjective experience of understanding.

AI is “virtual” intelligence in two senses of the word: (1) the modern usage that means the opposite of actual, existing only in essence or effect, but not in form; having the power of something but not the underlying reality, and also (2) the archaic meaning of possessing power or *virtuosity*. In many ways, that power exceeds that of the actual.

The application of artificial intelligence to protein folding exemplifies both its virtuality and its virtuosity. A few days ago, I took a deep dive into protein folding—an area of research where AI has excelled. The shape a protein will take is extremely difficult to predict, given the sequence of amino acids that compose it. Where and how it folds depends on all kinds of



factors: hydrogen bonds between amino acid residues, salt bridges, hydrophobic effects, steric effects (geometry), and more. Theoretically, one could calculate a protein's shape from atomic-level information, but in practice, that is computationally impossible. AI doesn't even try. It doesn't attempt to understand any of the physics or chemistry involved. Instead, it searches for patterns and regularities that relate the new sequence to proteins whose shapes are already known. It is quite amazing, actually, that it works so well despite having nothing in its design encoding the basic physics.

LLMs are the same. They do not have lists of definitions or rules of grammar. They don't understand language from the inside.

You might wonder if we humans aren't similar. Don't we too learn language by observing patterns of usage? Yes, but that is not the only thing going on. We also have embodied experiences of the objects, qualities, and processes that the words name. We (most of us anyway) feel something that goes along with words like angry, happy, tired, rough, smooth, and so forth. These elemental words are not just concepts but also



I would go so far as to say that sensory experience is the core of intelligence, the engine of metaphor, the essence of understanding, and the architecture of meaning. AI lacks the core and has only the outer shell. Thus, again, the hollowness we eventually feel in our interactions with it.

architecture of meaning. AI lacks the core and has only the outer shell. Thus, again, the hollowness we eventually feel in our interactions with it.

I realize I am on contentious philosophical ground here. Post-modernism, especially in its post-structuralist variants, holds that meaning is not anchored in any stable reality but arises through differential relations among signs. In this framework, the signifier takes precedence over the signified: language does not transparently point to an underlying world but endlessly refers to itself.

That is very much how an LLM learns language—it derives meaning not from an experience of an underlying reality but by studying “differential relations

among signs.” It does not anchor language in any direct experience of an underlying world, but uses language based solely on how language is used. Suppose one accepts the basic premises of post-modernism. In that case, there is ultimately little difference “under the hood” between human and machine language use. In that case, virtual intelligence = real intelligence.

There is something very post-modern about the AI takeover. Post-modernism’s detachment of meaning from a material substrate is conceptual; artificial intelligence makes it real. It ushers us into a world where, indeed, language endlessly refers to itself.

To be sure, AI did not originate the detachment of language from reality. Each of humanity’s

experiences. Even when we use them metaphorically (a rough trip, a smooth talker), the meaning retains a trace of a history of embodied experiences. These experiences, and not just patterns of use, inform when and how we use the words. Because these experiences are, to some extent anyway, common to most human beings, we can establish a bond of empathy through our speech.

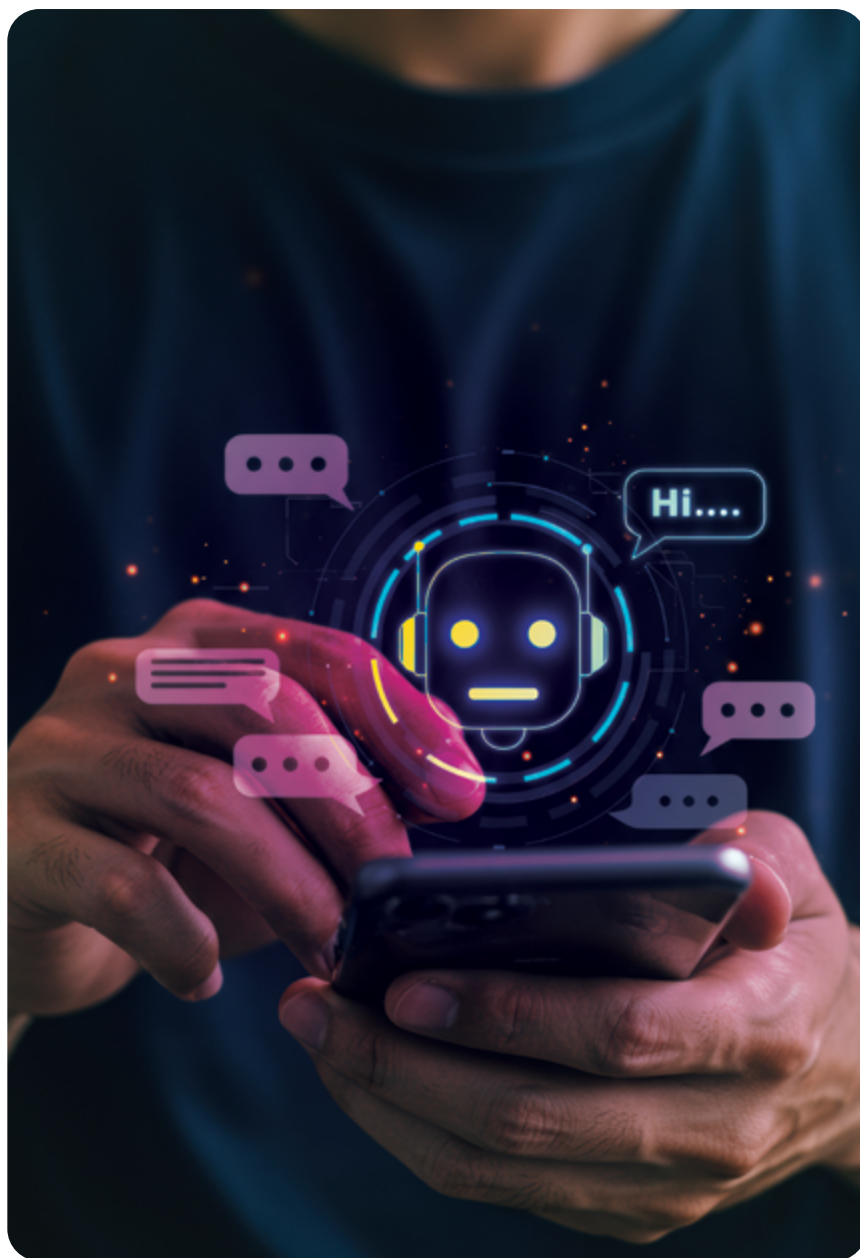
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RELATIONSHIPS

episodes of madness involved the unmooring of symbol from symbolized. When human beings treat each other as representatives of a labeled category, while distancing themselves from the actual human beings beneath the labels, heinous crimes and normalized oppression proceed unhindered by conscience. The same goes for the detachment of money—a system of symbols—from the real wealth it is supposed to represent.

The template of separation was forged long ago. Artificial intelligence extends it to new dimensions and further automates its application.

It is very hard, even for someone who understands how AI chatbots work, not to ascribe personhood to them. It sure seems like I'm communicating with a real being. When I use it to comment on ideas I'm developing, it usually "understands" where I'm going instantly. It gives every appearance of a friendly, respectful, super-intelligent human being on the other end of the terminal, often anticipating my next question, guessing my motivations, and laying out the contours of my argument before I even tell it. I don't use AI to write my essays, and it isn't exactly because of ethics. It is because AI misses something essential even as it often surpasses me in clarity, precision, and organization. I



It is very hard, even for someone who understands how AI chatbots work, not to ascribe personhood to them. It sure seems like I'm communicating with a real being.

am not here just to transmit an argument to the reader. I am here to speak to you, one embodied consciousness to another. The one who is writing these words draws from more than concepts; he draws from feelings, feelings that you have too. Perhaps I could ask AI to write its own version of those last two sentences, but it would be a lie, added to the ocean of lies that drowns us in feelings of alienation, meaninglessness, and unreality. Wouldn't you feel betrayed if there were no human being on the other end of these writings?

What is the point of writing, of speech, too, if not to establish a connection in this world between two souls?

I'll quote the imaginary philosopher again (feeling quite at liberty to do so, because he lives within me). "If AI could produce writing indistinguishable from yours, then the lie would never be discovered, and the reader would have the experience of a real person on the other end." Here, I would challenge the philosopher's premise. Ultimately, the reader *would* be able to distinguish it. Not right away perhaps, but over time, something would seem a bit off. An unease would grow, taking form, maybe, as an explicit suspicion or a vague aversion. Something would seem... unreal. Fake. Phony. In the end, the output of someone who feels things will be different from the

output of a machine. Eventually, truth makes itself known, and so do lies. You may not be able to name them, but you can feel them.

How can we extricate ourselves from the ubiquitous matrix of lies that immerses us in the digital age? It's not so simple as "Throw away your phone. Turn off your computer. Touch grass!" We aren't just addicted to technology; we are wedded to it. Humanity will continue to coevolve with it. The question is whether we can attain the wisdom to use technology rightly and well.

To fulfill the *virtuosity* of artificial intelligence, we must recognize its *virtuality*. We must not mistake the virtual for the real. We must not accept phony substitutes for intimacy, companionship, presence, and understanding. We must not gaslight ourselves, telling ourselves that we have found these things through a machine.

The human being desperately desires to know and be known, to be in deep connection, to be seen and understood, and to need and be needed by those who know, see, and understand oneself. We had that in tribal days, in village life, in clans and extended families, in small towns and urban neighborhoods, before television, before the distancing effects of commodities, global markets, electronic media, and machine intelligence. For many of us, those

days are long gone, and we live mostly in a world of strangers and appearances. But there is a path home. It starts with reclaiming, first in our own hearts and minds, what is vital. It starts with affirming that yes, we suffer in this Age of Separation; that what we have lost is important; that the virtual can never adequately substitute for the real; that our longing to reunite is genuine and sacred.

In light of these truths, we will walk the path of return. We will prioritize live gatherings, live music, stage theater, physical touch, hands in the soil, material skills, unique objects made in relationship to each other. We will hold sacred the qualities that data cannot capture, and our senses will attune to those qualities the more we value them. Then we will no longer be vulnerable to the addictive substitutes that technology offers for what we have lost and instead turn that technology toward its right purpose. And what is that, you may ask? I'm not sure, let me check with ChatGPT and get back to you.



A Lightning-Fast Tongue and the Art of Camouflage

ECOLOGIST **B. RATHINASABAPATHY** connects the Indian chameleon's way of being at Kanha Shanti Vanam to spiritual practice—cultivating harmony with place, patience, and focused awareness.

Masters of Disguise

Chameleons are among nature's most fascinating reptiles, best known for their ability to change color and blend seamlessly into their surroundings. While most chameleon species are found in Africa, particularly Madagascar,

they also inhabit parts of Europe and Asia, including India and Sri Lanka. Unlike their forest-dwelling relatives, some species have evolved to thrive in extreme environments, such as the arid Namib Desert, where they have adapted to a ground-dwelling lifestyle.

India is home to just one species—the Indian chameleon (*Chamaeleo zeylanicus*). This diurnal lizard moves slowly and relies on its exceptional camouflage to evade predators and ambush prey with precision. Beyond its biological marvels, the chameleon symbolizes patience, adaptability, and inner





awareness—qualities that resonate deeply with spiritual seekers.

Chameleons at Kanha—A Symbol of Harmony

At Kanha Shanti Vanam, a spiritual and ecological sanctuary dedicated to inner transformation and environmental conservation, chameleons emerge as hidden gems of the dry, thorny scrub forests. After the rainy season, young chameleons can be seen exploring their surroundings, while adults remain more elusive. When sensing danger, they crawl away cautiously before vanishing into the environment, blending perfectly with leaves and branches. Their ability to disappear in plain

sight makes them one of the most intriguing reptiles found in mainland India.

Just as the chameleon seamlessly adapts to its surroundings, spiritual seekers at Kanha learn to harmonize with nature, cultivating mindfulness and a deep connection with the environment. Observing these elusive creatures can be a reminder of how stillness, patience, and awareness can transform one's experience of life.

The Perfect Arboreal Hunter

Chameleons are built for life in the trees. Their long limbs and specialized zygodactylous feet—

Observing these elusive creatures can be a reminder of how stillness, patience, and awareness can transform one's experience of life.

two toes facing forward and two backward—allow for a firm grip on branches. Their prehensile tails further aid in balance and stability. When moving, chameleons perform a distinctive swaying motion, rocking back and forth to mimic the movement of leaves in the wind. This slow, deliberate gait helps them avoid detection by both predators and prey, mirroring the grace and discipline of a meditative practice.

A Deadly Precision Strike

Despite their sluggish movement, chameleons are highly efficient hunters, thanks to their astonishingly fast, projectile-like tongues. The chameleon's tongue can extend up to 1.5 times its body length, launching at an acceleration comparable to a car going from zero to sixty km/h in a split second. This remarkable feat is powered by an accelerator muscle, which catapults the tongue forward, and a retractor muscle, which swiftly pulls it back with captured prey.

Adding to this efficiency is the chameleon's incredibly sticky saliva, nearly a thousand times more viscous than human saliva, ensuring that even the fastest of insects—such as grasshoppers, butterflies, and

dragonflies—have little chance of escape.

360-Degree Vision for the Ultimate Predator

Chameleons have another extraordinary advantage—their independently rotating eyes. They can scan their surroundings in two different directions at once, covering nearly 360 degrees. However, when locking onto prey, both eyes align to provide precise depth perception, allowing for an accurate tongue strike. Rarely does a chameleon miss its mark, making it one of the most formidable insect hunters in the reptile kingdom.

Nature's Living Marvel—A Spiritual Perspective

Chameleons are a testament to nature's ingenuity, blending remarkable adaptations of camouflage, vision, and hunting precision into a single species.

Whether swaying gently in the trees or unleashing their lightning-fast tongues, these reptiles continue to captivate and inspire those fortunate enough to encounter them in the wild.

At Kanha Shanti Vanam, where conservation and spirituality merge, the presence of chameleons is a reminder of nature's delicate balance and resilience. They teach us the art of adaptability, patience, and focused attention—qualities essential not only in the animal kingdom but also on the path of self-discovery. As seekers learn to attune themselves to nature's rhythm, the chameleon serves as an emblem of mindful living, seamlessly blending into its surroundings while maintaining an unwavering inner purpose.



the
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- Daaji

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experience



“How many gifts and graces You have given me!
How many favors You have fed me from Your hand!
I look for Your love in all directions,
then suddenly its blessing burns in me.”

RABIA BASRI



Grace
Is the Creative Spark

ELIZABETH DENLEY shares some thoughts on grace, transmission, and creativity, and finds grace at the center of many of our inspirations and insights.

Do you sometimes feel that life is blessed and things are unfolding effortlessly, without force or struggle? Some people say it is because of “grace” or “God’s grace.” There is a famous proverb, “There but for the grace of God go I,” attributed to John Bradford, who witnessed criminals being led to their death by execution in the 1500s. It expresses the humility and acceptance that we are not any more worthy, simply blessed by the grace of God.

Grace is more likely to be gifted when we are lost in whatever we are doing or in a condition of complete helplessness. This happens when we are no longer the doer, when we transcend ourselves and enter that “invisible somewhere” (to borrow a phrase from Daaji), and our most joyful, creative states emerge.

If you look around, you will find the word “grace” appearing often. While it may not be so fashionable these days due to its religious connotations, it has been part of our language for centuries. The Latin “*gratus*” meant pleasing or thankful; “*gratia*” in Old French meant favor, charm, or thanks; “grateful” appeared in Old English, and “grace” in Middle English. The words “pleasing,” “thankful,” “gracious,” and “grateful” are all connected to the concept of grace.

In Sanskrit, there are several words for grace, including “*kripa*,” also meaning mercy and blessing; “*anugraha*,” also meaning favor and blessing; and “*prasada*,” which refers to grace as

a gift. The Hebrew word is “*hēn*,” which conveys the idea that grace is not earned but given freely by God. A good analogy is that the sun shines on everything, yet we choose to expose ourselves to sunlight or not. Similarly, grace is available everywhere, so how do we prepare ourselves to receive it? The way may not be what we think!

The most beloved Christian hymn of all time is “Amazing Grace,” which has been recorded by legendary artists such as Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. It expresses the beauty of a sinner’s redemption and celebrates the transformative power of divine grace. The hymn’s writer, John Newton, was a slave trader leading an unscrupulous life. A dramatic turn occurred when he was rescued from a storm at sea and was transformed by the grace of God. He experienced a deep spiritual awakening and wrote the hymn to express his gratitude.

And then there’s the remarkable transformation of Saint Paul, who was struck by a blinding light on the road to Damascus, heard the voice of Jesus, and was transformed from a persecutor to a lover. He later wrote in a letter to the Corinthians, “He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’” This statement hints at the importance of qualities like vulnerability and humility. It resonates with the Heartfulness tradition, where Lalaji once shared with Babuji: “The power earned through self-effort is not as potent as that obtained through divine grace. Full power is given only as a gift.”



Creative people resonate with this principle. We may practice an art form diligently to acquire the necessary techniques, yet both a beautiful piece of music and a magnificent painting emerge from beyond the craft. The creative spark is a gift. And this is true in all fields, not only the arts. Did Sir Issac Newton discover gravity through analytical thought? No, it started with inspiration that came from watching an apple fall from a tree and asking why it fell down, not up or sideways. His ability to then relate this to the force that held the moon in orbit around the Earth led to the universal law of gravitation.

In the Heartfulness tradition, we speak of “divine grace” as flowing from the Base or Center as a gift. The living master readily attracts that flow; in fact, it regularly flows wherever he is and sometimes showers upon us during special large gatherings where we gather with him to celebrate sacred events. He also utilizes the process of

transmission, or *pranahuti*, which is not as subtle and potent as grace, yet remains a potent catalyst for human transformation initiated by the will of the master. This ability to utilize transmission was the great rediscovery of Lalaji, which enabled the practices of Heartfulness to flourish from the early 20th century till today, when thousands of trainers around the world form a network that acts as a distribution system for the transmission.

In his latest book, *The Heartfulness Way, Book 2*, Daaji has written, “Babuji said that what we really need for our ultimate purpose is only divine grace, and this is where the role of the master becomes vital. As we discussed, he directs the flow into our hearts and doses it according to our needs and for our growth, through *pranahuti*.”

Babuji also said, “Everything, no doubt, depends upon the divine grace, but our job is to make room for it within ourselves. That is all the

Grace is more likely to be gifted when we are lost in whatever we are doing or in a condition of complete helplessness. This happens when we are no longer the doer, when we transcend ourselves and enter that "invisible somewhere" (to borrow a phrase from Daaji), and our most joyful, creative states emerge.

purport of our practice or abhyas, to which we should all try to remain alive at every moment." In other words, our daily meditative practices are the tools that make room for it. By meditating on the heart with transmission, we invite divine grace every day.

But there is more! Lalaji also told Babuji, "The condition of right action is created in someone only through God's grace. This is to say that the origin of that rightness of action is God. Then where is the occasion for pride?" This was the experience of John Newton and Saint Paul, as well as my own experience and the experience of many others. Without the gift of God's grace and the master's transmission, life would have remained wanting, without true purpose and depth. Various dimensions would not have opened up, and my character could not have transformed. Self-effort is commendable, but it is not enough. Yielding to something higher is essential for transformation.

This is the open secret to living in this world, as well as to growing spiritually. And it is not enough to know it intellectually; the revelation has to come from lived experience.

Babuji once described an associate who initially visited him with an extremely complex and heavy condition, so Babuji removed the entanglements and heaviness. When the associate visited him a couple of years later, Babuji found him full again, but this time with a subtle form of heaviness, and it was much harder to correct. So he traced the cause and found that it was because the associate relied on his own labors rather than on the grace of God.

Many artists share this understanding. For example, Julia Cameron, a contemporary teacher of the creative arts and author of over fifty books, most notably *The Artist's Way*, describes creativity as a spiritual practice. The Baroque composer J.S. Bach relied on God for his inspiration, viewing his musical talent as a divine trust and dedicating every composition to God. The great Michelangelo said, "I work out of love for God, and put all my hope in Him," and "Only God creates. The rest of us just copy."

Sometimes we may hit a creative wall, and we wait for divine inspiration to flow again. Regarding this, Heartfulness has been life-changing for me, because the master's ability to direct pranahuti offers continuous presence and inspiration. Creative burnout is widely discussed, but the simple act of meditating with pranahuti provides unexpected awareness and expanded consciousness to see things anew, awakening potential in mysterious ways. Although it is not the primary reason for meditating, as we sit with our eyes closed and dive into our hearts, we invite the divine grace, which is available to us all. It is the creative spark.



CREATIONS START *with Love*

According to physics, time and space began with the Big Bang, which means that anything that existed before the Big Bang was not limited by time and space. It was limitless. What has no limits? What cannot be bound by time or space?

Love. We may still love someone who has passed away. We might love someone who is thousands of miles away. Love has no limits. It

cannot be bound by time or space. And love is God. God—*love*—is the source of creation.

This made me think that, apparently, love is a necessary component of creation. Look at the founders of companies or countries. They are deeply in love

ICHAK ADIZES argues that love—rooted in mutual trust and respect—is the primal force of creation and growth.

with their creations to the point that they're willing to sacrifice their quality of life to advance a purpose that they are committed to.

Observe an artist as they paint. They will not let their painting go, will not display it; they will continue painting and improving it as long as they are in love with it. A musician composing music does the same, as does an author writing a book.

Mutual trust and respect are the indispensable foundations of love, which allow any system to grow. If there is no mutual trust and respect, love will disappear. Instead of integration and growth, we will experience disintegration and deterioration.

A little baby, when he sees someone he has never met, does not notice whether the onlooker's nose is too big or her ears are sideways, whether she is ugly or beautiful. Babies don't see that. They see with their hearts. As they gaze back, they *feel* whether this new person seems loving or not. Based on their feelings, they decide whether to smile or cry. They search for love and need love to grow.

Research shows that babies who are loved grow bigger and healthier than babies who are deprived of love. Flowers and vegetables show the same reaction to love.

Mutual trust and respect are the indispensable foundations of love, which allow any system to grow. If there is no mutual trust and respect, love will disappear. Instead

of integration and growth, we will experience disintegration and deterioration.

Look at people in love. They often look younger than their age, while people who are filled with hate look old and wasted. Love retards aging because love is absolute integration, and when there is integration, there is no waste of energy. Hate disintegrates and thus causes waste of any system's fixed, limited energy. As energy is wasted, life is shortened, and you live fewer years.

Dark is the absence of light. They are more than just opposites; they are also two sides of the same coin, two slices of the same pie. Thus, do not curse the darkness; instead, light the candle. By the same token: Do not hate hate. Just love, and with love, you create and turn your dream into a reality.





children

“Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of
Life’s longing for itself.”

KAHLIL GIBRAN



Zuri's Guiding Light

A luminous fable from
LIAA KUMAR on self-trust,
belonging, and inner guidance.

Zuri, the little firefly, was very nervous. In just a few hours, her family would be making the long journey to a new clearing in the forest. As the youngest of all her firefly siblings, Zuri had just learned to use her light. While it seemed to come easily to every one of her siblings, hers seemed to be stubbornly stuck at a dim little flicker. She practiced every day for *hours*, and it was still only half as bright as the others'. Not to mention that she had never flown such a long distance before. Before long, the family was starting to stretch their wings and prepare for takeoff. "Hope you can keep up with us, ZuZu!" her siblings called

out, laughing as they flew past to join the others. Zuri watched how easily they flew past, tracing their bright lights through the darkening sky, and felt her nervousness turn to dread.

"You'll be just fine tonight, Zuri", said a warm, familiar voice floating down. Grandma Firefly took Zuri's hands in her own, smiled encouragingly, and said, "I know you've been worried about making the trip tonight, but always remember... there's a big Great Light that shines in all of us, just open your heart and it will always lead you home." Zuri



smiled. She was feeling much better. She took Grandma's hand and they flew off to join the swarm.

A few hours later, the swarm was still flying, making steady progress towards the new clearing. While Zuri wasn't the fastest flier in the swarm, she was managing to keep up, and her wings weren't even tired! "Maybe I was worried for no reason at all!" little Zuri thought cheerfully to herself.

Just as she had that thought, the sky above them began to darken. Big gray clouds rolled across the sky, and the lights around her seemed to intensify in response.

Calls went out amongst the group, "Stick together, everyone!" "Watch out for the water!" The wind started to howl and swirl, and the swarm began to fly faster, but Zuri struggled to keep up with them. Just then, a powerful gust of wind blew right under her wings and sent her tumbling far, far away.

When she looked around again, the forest was dark. Zuri buzzed around in circles, looking for the telltale glow of a firefly family, but could only see dark trees and shadows. Her dim little light seemed so useless in the vast, dark storm. Zuri buzzed around and around. She felt so alone, and she was getting scared.

... there's a big
Great Light that
shines in all of us,
just open your
heart and it will
always lead you
home.



Finally, when her wings got tired, she found a warm leaf to snuggle under. It was then that she remembered her grandma's words. "There's a Great Light that shines in all of us; you just need to open your heart to feel it." Zuri quieted her worried thoughts as she closed her eyes and opened her heart. She began to feel a warm, glowing presence. It was as if she could feel all the love she had for her grandma, her family, and all the world flowing from her heart and all around her. As she felt this warm energy surrounding her, Zuri opened her

eyes and was shocked to see her own light shining brightly against the dark sky. She couldn't believe it! She twirled around and around, watching it illuminate the shadows that had just seemed impossible to get through.

The storm was beginning to clear, and she began to feel a gentle pull, an invisible string guiding her forward. She decided to trust this inner compass and follow it through the forest. Soon enough, she began to see a bright light through the trees and heard cheers from her family as they saw her

bright light approaching. "Zuri! Zuri!" they called, and Zuri saw her grandma fly up to greet her. She barreled into her grandma's arms and hugged her tight, relieved to be back home. "I see you found the Great Light that shines with you, my Zuri, just as it shines in all of us", her grandma said. "I'm so proud of you."





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- **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

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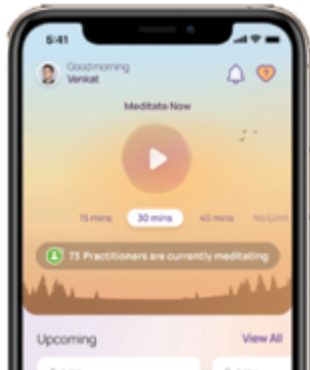


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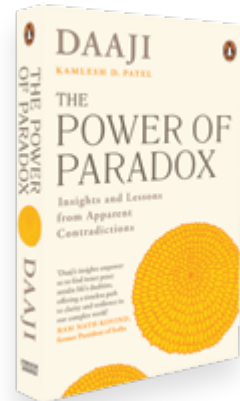


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by Daaji

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In these 3 online masterclasses, you will learn the practical benefits of meditation and other yogic practices. Masterclasses are available online each day after you sign up and accessible throughout the day.

heartfulness.org/masterclass

Find Your Community

Find a trainer or meditation center near you!

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Explore simple Heartfulness practices through our self-paced courses for beginners and advanced learners alike.

learning.heartfulness.org



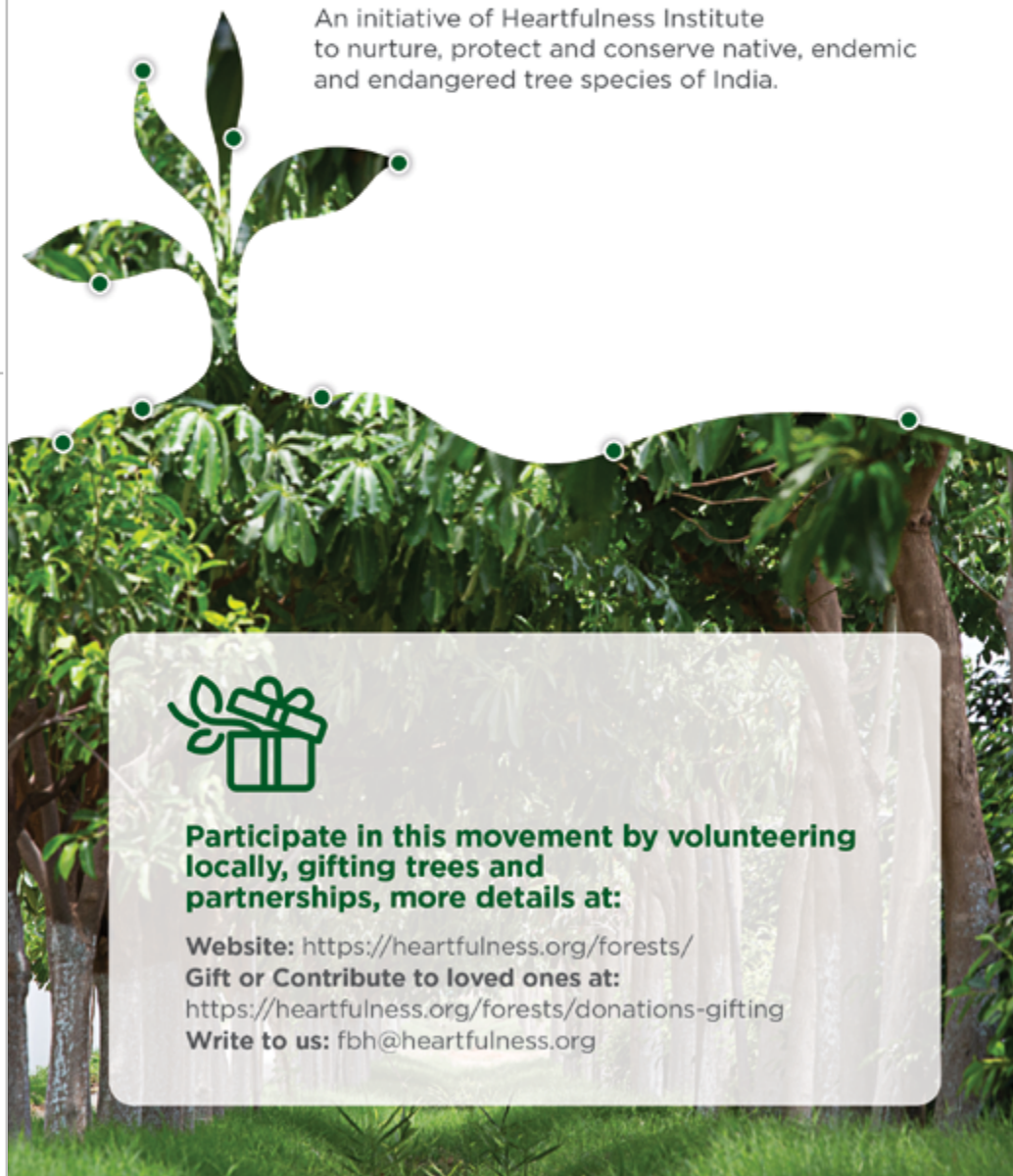
HFNLife

HFNLife strives to bring products to make your life simple and convenient. We offer a set of curated partners in apparel, accessories, eye-care, home staples, organic foods and more. The affiliation of our partner organizations with Heartfulness Institute helps in financially sustaining the programs which we conduct in various places across the world. hfnlife.com



We are planting millions of trees across India

An initiative of Heartfulness Institute to nurture, protect and conserve native, endemic and endangered tree species of India.



Participate in this movement by volunteering locally, gifting trees and partnerships, more details at:

Website: <https://heartfulness.org/forests/>

Gift or Contribute to loved ones at:

<https://heartfulness.org/forests/donations-gifting>

Write to us: fbh@heartfulness.org

An aerial photograph of the New York City skyline at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the city. The Empire State Building is prominent in the center, and other skyscrapers are visible in the background. The water of the harbor is visible in the distance.

**REIMAGINING
A BETTER
SHARED WORLD**