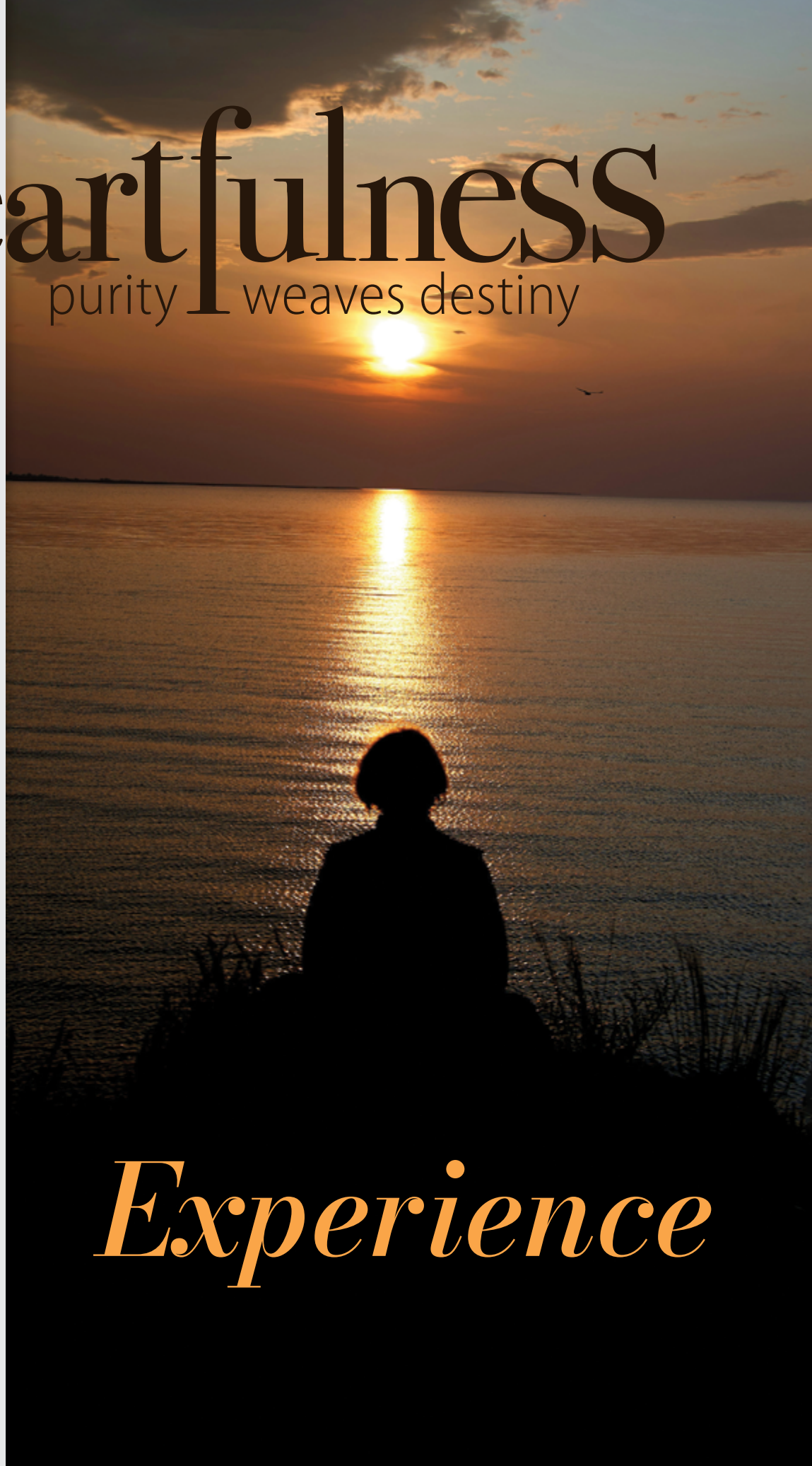
OCTOBER 2026

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Are You Willing to Be Changed?
DAAJI AND ICHAK ADIZES

The Biochemistry of Well-Being
MANSEE THAKUR

Yoga in Practice
BHUSHAN BHUKTE

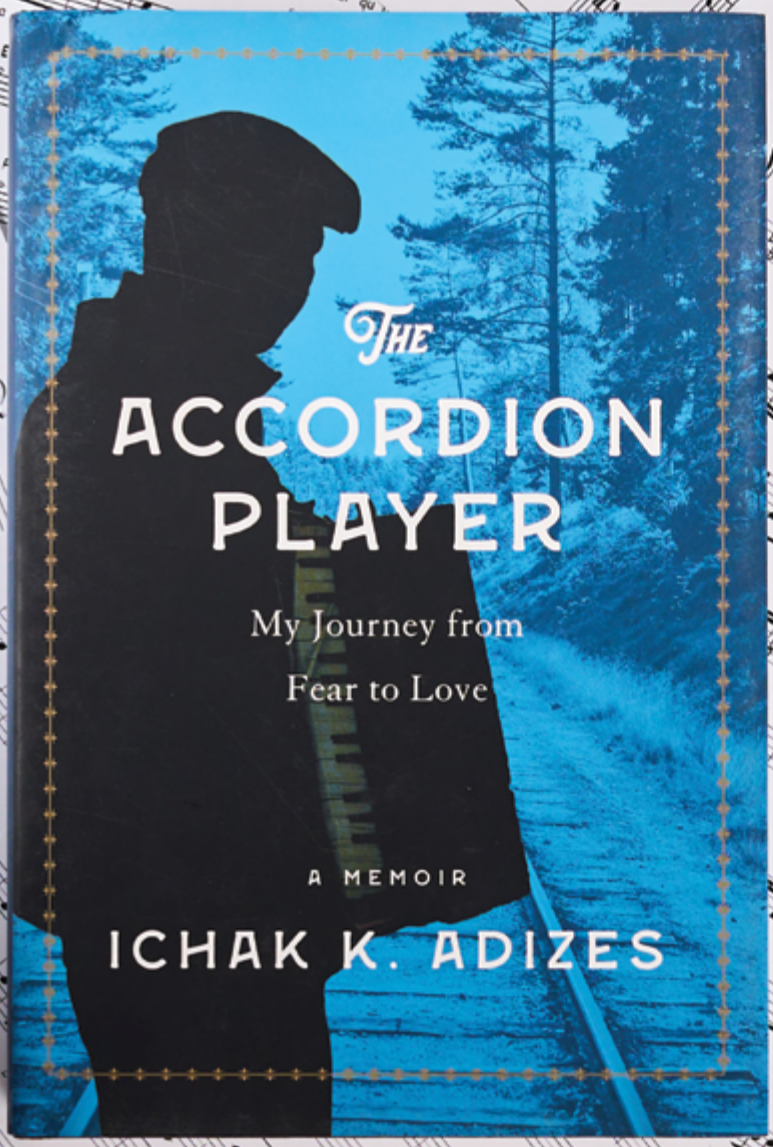
THE CARBON SOLUTION IS IN OUR HANDS

ISSN 0000-0248

Experience

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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

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Foreword by Daaji

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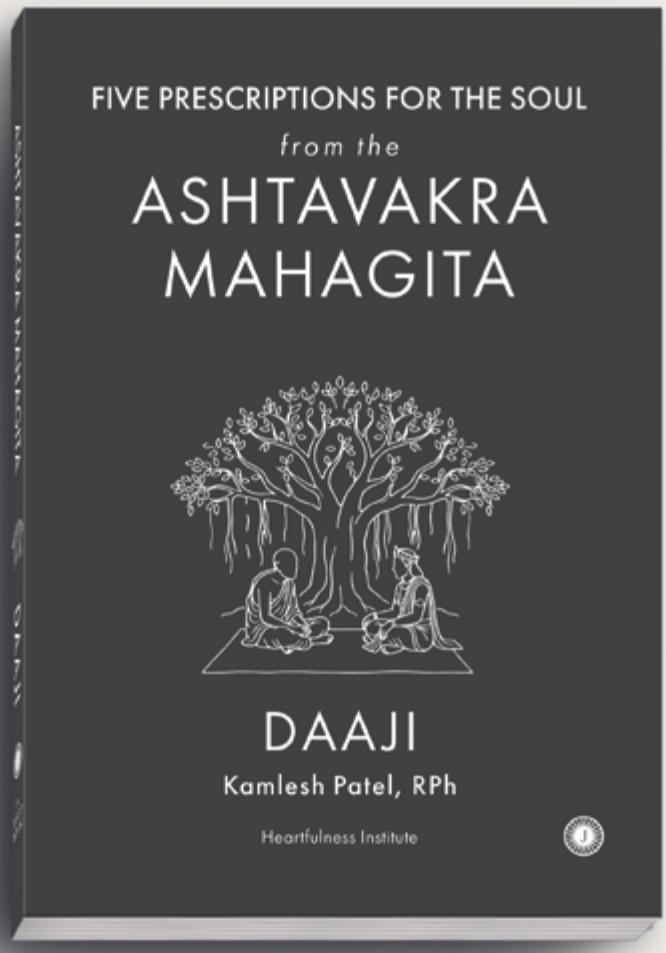
FIVE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SOUL

from the

ASHTAVAKRA MAHAGITA



Daaji,
Kamlesh Patel
Author



Despite years of growth, meditation, or self-improvement, certain emotions—old resentments, past conversations, inner conflicts—continue to resurface. The Five Inner Medicines addresses this persistent challenge with clarity and depth.

Inspired by an ancient exchange between a king and a sage, this book presents five powerful disciplines—*kshama* [forgiveness], *arjava* [sincerity], *daya* [compassion], *santosha* [contentment], and *satya* [truth]—as remedies for the mind and heart.

Through the wisdom shared by Daaji, this book goes beyond theory and invites you into a reflective process:

Are you ready to apply these "medicines" in the right way?

A key teaching emphasizes treating worldly attachments (*vishayas*) with caution—like poison (*visham*)—to regain mastery over your thoughts and emotions.

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IMPRINT AND COLOPHON

ISSN 2455-7684

Publisher—Sunil Kumar, representing Heartfulness Education Trust
13-110, Kanha Shanti Vanam, Kanha Village, Nandigama Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, Telangana 509325, India

Editor—Neeraj Kumar

Printed by—Sunil Kumar,
Siri Arts, Lakdikapul, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

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Dear readers,

Knowledge is important. But as this month's issue shows, knowledge alone cannot transform us.

In "*Five Prescriptions for the Soul*," we see that understanding a spiritual philosophy is not the same as living it. Similarly, "Are You Willing to Be Changed?" encourages us to embrace an experiential approach to spirituality. And spiritual practice is at the heart of this approach, as we discover in "The 95 Percent." Finally, through "Pause, Connect, Reflect," we understand that children learn empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation by practicing them, not through mere instruction.

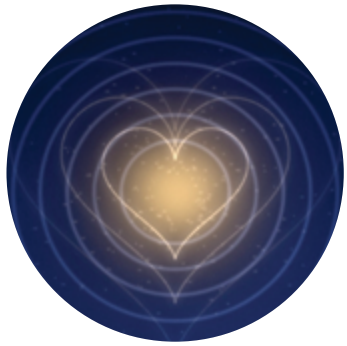
Perhaps one reason is that knowledge belongs to the past, whereas experience belongs to the present moment—the only moment that is real.

We welcome your reflections, experiences, and other submissions. Please visit heartfulness.org/magazine/contribute or scan the QR code below.

Happy reading,
The editors




















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MAHAGITA
DAAJI





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wellness

"Yoga takes you into the present moment,
the only place where life exists."

PEMA CHÖDRÖN



The Gut

A Foundation for Health

The health of the gut affects far more than digestion. This article explores its connection to overall well-being and the everyday habits that can help support it.

BY DR. RAGHUVEER S. N.

A healthy gut is one of the strongest foundations for a healthy life. Often called the "second brain," the gut plays a vital role not only in digestion but in immunity, metabolism, mental well-being, and overall health. Let us explore how simple Ayurvedic wisdom and practical everyday habits nourish your gut, improve digestion, strengthen immunity, and help you feel healthier from within.

Many of us ignore common digestive problems such as bloating, acidity, constipation, or a feeling of heaviness after meals. These symptoms do not always indicate a serious condition, but they may be signs that your digestive system needs care. The good news is that improving gut health does not begin with expensive supplements or strict diets. It begins in your own kitchen, through simple food choices and healthy daily routines that have stood the test of time.

Have you ever noticed how some people seem energetic from morning till night, while others feel tired even after a good night's sleep? Why do some people enjoy every meal without discomfort, while others constantly complain of gas, acidity, or bloating? The answer is not always found in medicines. More often than not, it begins with the health of the digestive system.

As an Ayurvedic physician, I have repeatedly observed that many health concerns are closely linked to poor digestion. People visit wellness centers for diabetes, joint pain, obesity, skin problems, or thyroid disorders, but during the conversation, they also report long-standing digestive issues that they had almost forgotten to mention. They have simply accepted these problems as a part of life. The truth is that our gut quietly influences almost every aspect of our health. Taking care of it is one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves.

Feed Your Gut, Not Just Your Hunger

One of the simplest changes you can make is to eat only when you genuinely feel hungry. Constant snacking, eating out of boredom, and skipping meals only to overeat later can put unnecessary stress on the digestive system. Ayurveda encourages us to allow one meal to digest before starting the next. Your stomach also deserves time to rest.

Lunch should ideally be the largest meal of the day. Digestion is naturally stronger during the afternoon, making it easier for the body to process wholesome meals. Dinner, on the other hand, should be lighter and eaten at least two to three hours before bedtime. This simple habit alone can reduce acidity, improve sleep, and make you feel lighter the next morning.

The truth is that our gut quietly influences almost every aspect of our health. Taking care of it is one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves.



Your Kitchen Already Has Many Remedies

Good digestive health often begins with ingredients that are already present in your kitchen. A small piece of fresh ginger with a pinch of rock salt before lunch may help improve appetite in suitable individuals. After meals, chewing a teaspoon of roasted fennel seeds can freshen the mouth and support comfortable digestion.

Homemade buttermilk with roasted cumin powder, chopped coriander leaves, and a pinch of roasted rock salt is a traditional digestive drink that many Indian households have used for generations. Freshly prepared green gram khichdi [a soft rice-and-lentil dish], vegetable soups, and lightly cooked seasonal vegetables are excellent choices whenever digestion feels sluggish.

Adding small quantities of ghee to freshly cooked meals may also support digestion when used in moderation. Indian gooseberry, pomegranate, ripe papaya, and seasonal fruits can be wonderful additions to the daily diet because they provide fiber and natural nourishment for the digestive system.

Foods Your Gut Will Thank You For

Your gut enjoys fresh food much more than packaged food. Try including colorful vegetables, whole grains, fresh fruits, sprouts, soaked nuts, homemade curd (if suitable for your body), fermented traditional foods, and adequate water throughout the day.

Equally important is reducing foods that place an unnecessary burden on digestion. Frequent consumption of deep-fried snacks, bakery products, sugary beverages, processed foods, excessive refined flour, and repeated use of reheated oil can gradually affect digestive comfort. Eating while watching television or scrolling on your phone may also lead to overeating because the mind is distracted from the meal.

Give Your Gut a Day of Rest

Just as we enjoy taking a day off from work, our digestive system also benefits from an occasional rest. Once a week, consider choosing lighter meals such as khichdi, vegetable soup, steamed vegetables, or rice gruel instead of heavy, rich foods. This is not about fasting or depriving yourself. It is about allowing the digestive system to recover from the demands of everyday eating.

Eating slowly is another powerful habit that costs nothing. Chewing food well is the first step of digestion, yet it is often the most neglected. Taking 20 minutes to enjoy a meal instead of finishing it in five can make a noticeable difference over time.

Wellness Begins with Simple Choices

Lasting health is created through awareness, not shortcuts. If digestive discomfort has become a part of your everyday life, perhaps it is time to listen to what your body has been trying to say. You do not have to wait until symptoms become serious to begin caring for your health. Sometimes, the journey toward better health begins with a simple conversation, a few mindful changes, and the willingness to care for yourself—one healthy habit at a time.



A Calm Mind Supports a Healthy Gut

Have you ever lost your appetite during periods of stress? Have you noticed stomach discomfort before an important interview or examination? This happens because the mind and the digestive system are constantly connected.

For this reason, gut health is not influenced only by food. Sleep, emotional well-being, and daily stress also play an important role. A few minutes of deep breathing, gentle yoga, and daily meditation can help calm the mind, which in turn supports healthier digestion. Sometimes, improving gut health begins not in the kitchen but in the mind.

The goal is not to follow a perfect diet. It is to develop a way of living that your body can happily follow for years. Small habits practiced every day will always be more powerful than dramatic changes that last only a week.

FROM WELLNESS BY HEARTFULNESS

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About Us


A meaningful
yoga practice
should leave
us feeling
more
balanced,
aware, steady,
and confident.

Yoga in Practice

A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO ASANA

Knowing what we are ready for, how to prepare, and when to progress can help us approach asana practice with greater awareness and confidence.

BY **BHUSHAN BHUKTE**

Yoga is more popular than ever. Social media is filled with impressive postures, extraordinary flexibility, and challenging sequences. While such images may inspire us, they can also create the misconception that yoga is primarily about physical performance.

In reality, yoga is a journey of self-development. Every practitioner begins from a different point, with a unique body, mind, level of experience, and life situation. Each practitioner needs to understand their own starting point, work within their present capacity, and gradually develop their potential.

A meaningful yoga practice should leave us feeling more balanced, aware, steady, and confident, rather than exhausted, strained, or discouraged. The aim is to understand our present capacity, work with it intelligently, and expand it gradually through consistent, mindful practice.

The Purpose of Asana

Patanjali defines yoga in Yoga Sutra 1.2 as *yogash chitta vritti nirodhah*, the cessation of all the modifications of the mind in the field of consciousness. Asana, or posture, is one limb of that path, and its purpose is narrower and more practical: to develop the steadiness and ease of body and mind through which that stillness becomes possible.

In Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga system, asana's purpose extends beyond physical fitness and health. It helps stabilize the mind and deepen our awareness of it, allowing it to settle into a clear, balanced state from which deeper practice can begin.

Asana, or posture, is one limb of that path, and its purpose is narrower and more practical: to develop the steadiness and ease of body and mind through which that stillness becomes possible.

Whenever the form of a posture starts to feel like the most important thing, remember this: each posture is practice for stillness.

The Golden Rule: Practice What You Are Ready For

One common mistake beginners make is imitating advanced practitioners. Every practice has a natural progression, and each body adapts at its own pace. What works for one person may not work for another.

> *Yoga practice should be adapted to the individual, not the individual forced to fit the practice.*

When deciding whether to practice a particular posture, ask:

- Can I maintain stable alignment and breathing?
- Can I remain relaxed and attentive?
- Can I practice without pain or unnecessary strain?
- Is this posture appropriate for my present capacity and level of experience?
- Can I maintain awareness throughout the practice?

These questions shift the focus from performance to readiness.





Physical ability alone does not determine readiness for a posture. Readiness involves more than flexibility or strength. It includes our breathing pattern, stability, coordination, awareness, concentration, and the ability to practice without excessive effort or fear.

A posture may look simple, but preparing to practice it safely may take time. *Preparation is part of the practice.* Progress comes from developing the foundations needed for the next stage.

Observation Before Practice

Learning begins with observation.

Before attempting a practice, understand what it requires, how it should be performed, and whether it is appropriate for your present capacity.

Observe first. Understand next. Practice thereafter.

During practice, observation gradually becomes self-awareness. The practitioner begins to notice:

- How does my body feel?
- How is my breathing?
- Am I stable and comfortable?
- What level of effort am I using?
- What is happening in my mind?
- Am I practicing with awareness or simply following instructions?

This process helps us recognize when to maintain or modify a posture, or when to come out of it. It also develops the ability to make appropriate choices rather than depending entirely on external instruction.

Safety Comes First

Yoga should never become a competition—with others or with oneself. The goal is to practice in a way that supports health, awareness, and steady development.

Before and During Practice

- Prepare the body gradually.
- Enter and come out of postures with control.
- Never force a stretch or push beyond a comfortable range of movement.
- Distinguish between normal effort and pain.
- Treat pain, dizziness, breathlessness, or unusual discomfort as signals to pause or stop and reassess.
- Coordinate movement with breathing wherever appropriate.
- Use modifications when required.
- Respect individual limitations, previous injuries, and current physical condition.
- Avoid comparing your practice with another person's practice.
- Seek qualified guidance when a practice is unfamiliar or beyond your current experience.
- Allow adequate recovery rather than assuming that more practice always means better progress.

A useful principle to hold onto: Do what you are ready for, prepare for what you are not yet ready for, and progress gradually.

If you do not understand a practice, seek proper guidance first. Practice should follow understanding.

Yoga is closer to cultivation than to consumption: a few movements performed in full attention are worth more than many performed in haste.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher's responsibility is to create the conditions in which practitioners can learn, understand, and progress safely. Like scaffolding around a developing structure, appropriate guidance helps the practitioner develop greater stability, confidence, understanding, and independence.

The teacher's role is to *observe, guide, encourage, and empower.*

A teacher observes the practitioner's needs, provides appropriate guidance, encourages sincere effort, and gradually enables the practitioner to become more independent and confident.

The teacher provides direction and support; the practitioner develops through their own experience and practice. A teacher's demonstration is only to help practitioners understand what they can progressively learn to do.

Good teaching should not create dependence on the teacher, but gradually develop the practitioner's understanding, adaptability, and responsibility for their own practice.

A useful principle to hold onto: Do what you are ready for, prepare for what you are not yet ready for, and progress gradually.



The Path Forward

Yoga is a process of becoming more fully aware of who we already are, rather than trying to become something we are not. With proper guidance, regular practice, appropriate progression, and patient effort, yoga can support flexibility, strength, balance, relaxation, mental clarity, and inner confidence.

Remember these three principles:

1. Preparation before performance.
2. Understanding before practice.
3. Sound method with gradual progression.

Final Reflection

Progress in yoga is not measured by the difficulty of a posture or the flexibility of the body. It is reflected in the awareness we bring to practice and, over time, to daily life—in how we think, respond, relate, and live each day.

FROM THE HEARTFULNESS YOGA ACADEMY

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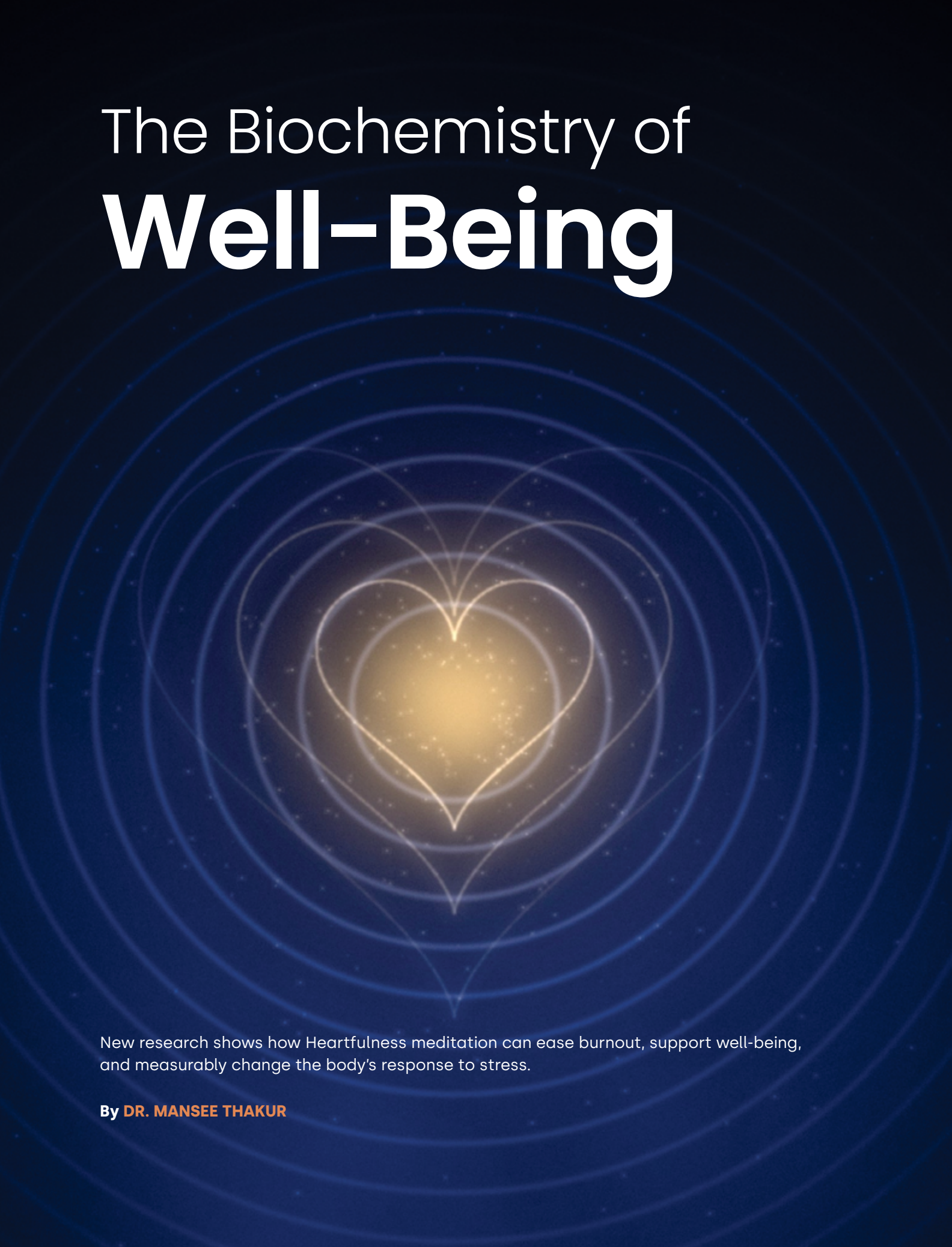
research

"Science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated."

ROSALIND FRANKLIN



The Biochemistry of **Well-Being**



New research shows how Heartfulness meditation can ease burnout, support well-being, and measurably change the body's response to stress.

By DR. MANSEE THAKUR

Meditation has moved from the margins of spiritual practice into the mainstream of science. Researchers are increasingly asking whether the inner changes people experience through meditation can also be measured in the body. A 2025 study published in *Stress and Health* adds intriguing evidence: Heartfulness meditation appears to reduce stress biomarkers and burnout while enhancing overall well-being in young adults.

The impact of stress

Mental health is a vital component of overall health and well-being, and the rising prevalence of mental health problems has become a major public health concern. Stress triggers a cascade of biochemical responses in the body. When the brain perceives a threat, it activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, signaling the adrenal glands to release cortisol into the bloodstream. While this response prepares the body to cope with immediate challenges, prolonged cortisol elevation contributes to anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disorders, impaired immunity, and burnout characterized by exhaustion, detachment, and reduced performance. Young adults are particularly vulnerable to these effects. Against this backdrop, researchers in India investigated whether Heartfulness meditation could serve as an effective non-pharmacological intervention to reduce stress. The randomized controlled study enrolled 100 participants aged 18–24 years with moderate to high perceived stress. Fifty participants practiced Heartfulness meditation daily for 12 weeks, while the remaining 50 were assigned to a sham meditation program that served as the control group, enabling an objective comparison of outcomes.

Measuring the Invisible Signs of Stress

The investigators did not rely on self-reports alone. They measured serum cortisol to track psychological stress, nitrate/nitrite levels as indicators of protective antioxidant activity, and malondialdehyde (MDA). Psychological outcomes were assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory and the World Health Organization's Well-Being Index.

This dual approach combining subjective scales with objective biomarkers allowed the team to capture both the lived experience of stress and its hidden biochemical signatures.

Heartfulness meditation appears to reduce stress biomarkers and burnout while enhancing overall well-being in young adults.

HOW STRESS MOVES THROUGH THE BODY

01
Threat perceived
The brain registers a challenge.

→

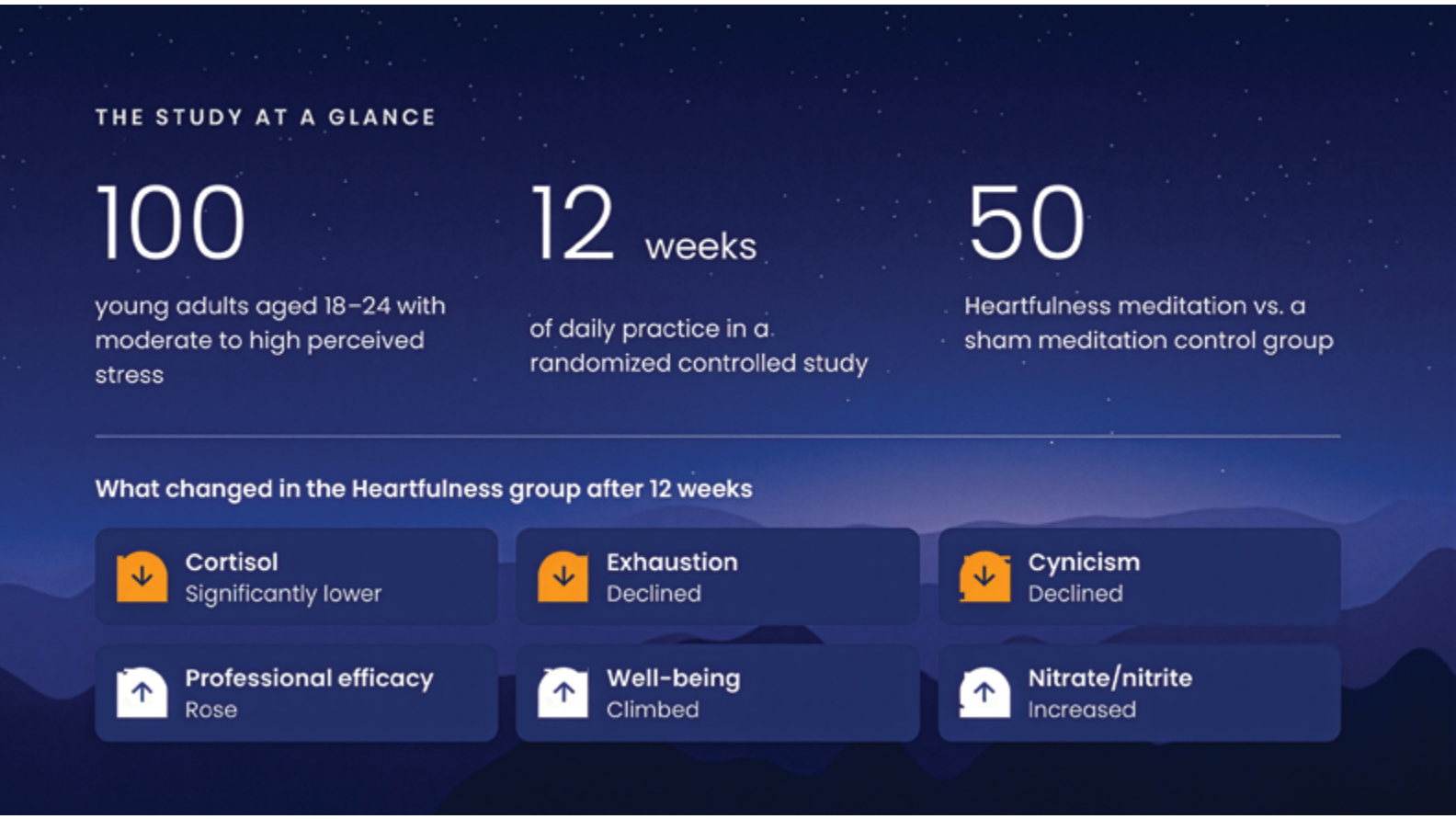
02
HPA axis activates
The body's stress system switches on.

→

03
Cortisol released
The stress hormone enters the blood.

→

04
When it stays high
Anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disorders, impaired immunity and burnout.



The Findings

After 12 weeks, the differences between the groups were striking. Participants in the Heartfulness group showed a significant reduction in cortisol. Burnout scores improved: exhaustion and cynicism declined, while professional efficacy rose. Well-being scores climbed too, reflecting a more positive outlook on life.

Biochemically, the meditation group exhibited increased nitrate/nitrite levels, associated with protective antioxidant activity. Meanwhile, MDA levels correlated negatively with well-being, reinforcing the link between oxidative stress and psychological distress. In short, Heartfulness meditation appeared to recalibrate both mind and body.



Why Heartfulness?

This study explored Heartfulness meditation as a preventive measure to improve overall health and well-being in young adults. The results lend credibility to the positive effects of Heartfulness meditation on stress biomarkers, burnout, and well-being. In this study, Heartfulness meditation, with its distinctive feature of Yogic Transmission, significantly reduced stress among young adults facing a range of life stressors.

Caveats

The study has its limitations. The study included only 100 young adults and lasted 12 weeks, so it remains unclear whether the effects persist over time. The participants were also relatively homogeneous in age and cultural background, raising questions about generalizability to more diverse populations. Sham meditation, while a useful control, may not perfectly mimic the expectancy effects of genuine practice.

Still, the findings align with a broader literature suggesting that contemplative practices can modulate stress physiology. They add a valuable piece to the puzzle: Meditation is not merely a subjective balm but a measurable intervention with real biochemical consequences.



Implications for Mental Health

The implications are profound. If a simple, no-cost practice such as Heartfulness can reduce cortisol and improve well-being, it could complement existing therapies for stress and burnout. Universities, workplaces, and healthcare systems might consider integrating Heartfulness sessions into their wellness programs. For individuals, the message is empowering: cultivating calm through meditation may literally reshape the body's stress response.

The Heart Holds the Key

The study offers a compelling message: in a world where stress is widespread, the heart may hold the key to resilience. By turning inward through Heartfulness meditation, young adults experienced not only psychological relief but also measurable biochemical evidence of healing. These findings support the growing scientific understanding that the mind and body are deeply interconnected, and that contemplative practices like Heartfulness can restore balance, strengthen resilience, and foster inner harmony.

FROM HEARTFULNESS RESEARCH

Heartfulness Research studies the effects of meditation from both neuroscientific and qualitative perspectives.

heartfulnessinstitute.org/research/

Source:

Mansee Thakur, Sanjana T. Philip, Kunal R. Desai, and Kapil Thakur, "Effect of Heartfulness Meditation on Stress Biomarkers, Burnout and Well-Being: A Randomized Controlled Study," *Stress and Health* (2025), https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40271908/

feature

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

MAHATMA GANDHI



Five Prescriptions for the Soul

—*A Book Review*

In Five Prescriptions for the Soul, Daaji takes one of India's most uncompromising teachings and does something rather audacious with it: he asks what enlightenment looks like when it has to survive Monday morning at work.

BY EKTA BOUDERLIQUE

Out of sheer habit, I venture into the airport bookshop, which is lined, rather ominously, with self-help books. There are books telling me how to think, eat, sleep, love, lead, age, succeed, heal, and apparently, become the most optimized version of myself before boarding even begins. Faced with so much improvement, giving up on self-development suddenly feels wonderfully human.

Daaji's new book is already in my bag. I had picked up a copy at its launch earlier in the trip, and, amid the usual commotion of travel, had not yet found the time to read it. Now, as the flight takes off, I open Five Prescriptions for the Soul from the Ashtavakra Mahagita. That wonderful smell of a newly printed book exhilarates me, and I confess to approaching it with particular curiosity.

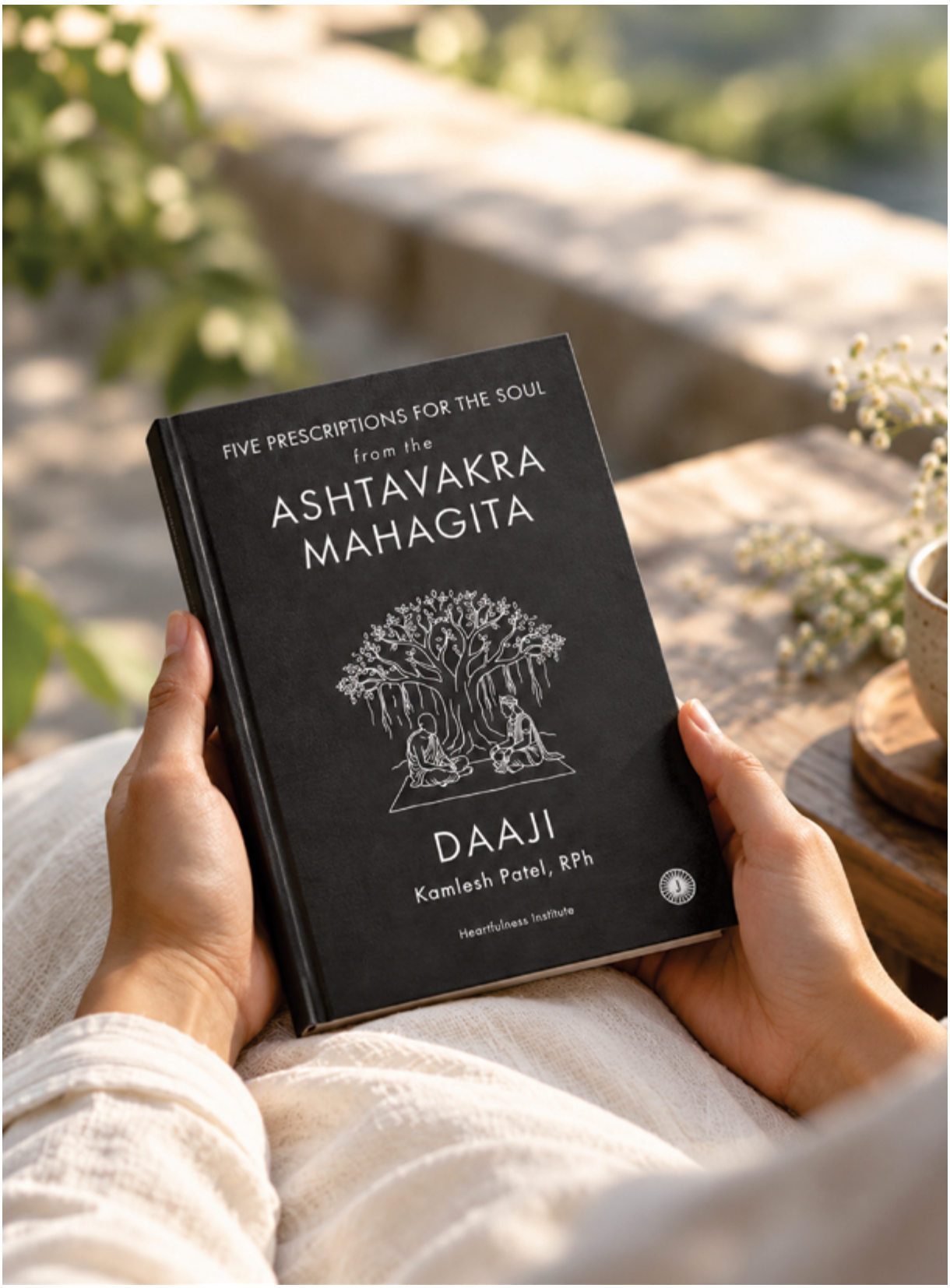
Ashtavakra's story may be familiar to many, but the Ashtavakra Gita is hardly light reading. It is one of those magnificent Indian texts that wastes very little time reassuring the reader. Its proposition is radical: you are already free; your difficulty is that you have mistaken yourself for someone who is not.

And now Daaji has written a book about it with an unusual title.

Those who know me will hardly expect complete impartiality where Daaji is concerned, so let me dispense with that pretense immediately. I know him well enough to be both tender and occasionally amused by the unexpected directions his teachings take, even as I admit that familiarity may be a dangerous advantage for a reviewer.

But the title already has me smiling. Daaji spent more than three decades as a pharmacist in New York, and here he is, after all these years, still writing prescriptions. Five of them, this time.

A few pages later, however, my smile fades into serious focus. This is so not a self-help book! Or, if it is, it is the most subversive one I have encountered, since, somewhere along the way, it


FIVE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SOUL
from the
ASHTAVAKRA MAHAGITA
DAAJI
Kamlesh Patel, RPh
Heartfulness Institute

begins questioning the existence of the very self we are so industriously trying to improve.

Later, I muse on the impressive number of methods we develop for escaping our limited selves. We pray, meditate, fall in love, run marathons, paint, and listen to music, as we fight back the pain of life's endlessly mundane challenges. The methods may differ, yet the hope beneath them is oddly consistent. How many times have we thought, if only for a moment: Could the person carrying my life please *disappear?*

Enter Ashtavakra.

This ancient Indian text featuring the young sage proposes a more inconvenient possibility. While we seek escape from ourselves, perhaps the deeper issue is that we have mistaken ourselves for something that was never quite us in the first place. It is, I realize with a huge sigh, such a liberating thought—though a very upsetting one as well.

At the center of the book is the famous dialogue between King Janaka and Ashtavakra. Janaka possesses almost everything the modern world teaches us to acquire: wealth, position, intelligence, learning, and influence. Yet he remains restless. Daaji captures his condition in one beautiful sentence: "The gap between knowing and being was the wound he carried."

Daaji captures his condition in one beautiful sentence: "The gap between knowing and being was the wound he carried."

There, I think, lies the reason this ancient conversation feels so contemporary.

We may be the most advice-saturated civilization in history. We know astonishing amounts about the brain, trauma, dopamine, sleep, relationships, emotional intelligence, productivity, and well-being. We have podcasts explaining how to breathe, and watches reminding us when to work out and even when to eat. Knowledge about how to live has become almost embarrassingly abundant. Yet the state of our planet and its inhabitants somehow contradicts all this evidence that we have consequently become better at living.

Janaka's questions therefore travel remarkably well across thousands of years, now landing in my hands through Daaji's book: How do I attain knowledge? How do I become free? How do I loosen attachment?

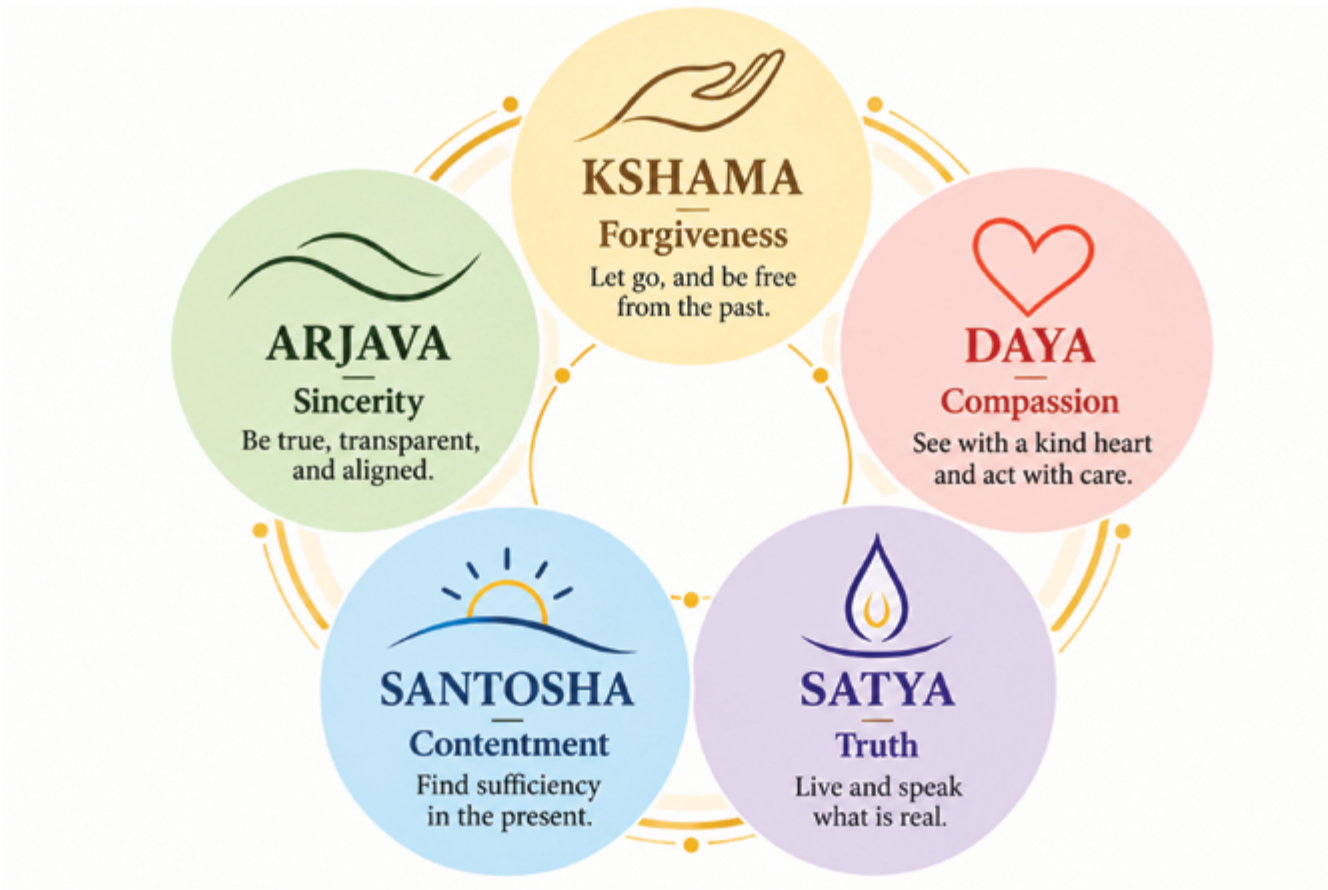
Ashtavakra's answer is almost absurdly economical: *kshama, arjava, daya, santosha,* and *satya*—forgiveness, sincerity, compassion, contentment, and truth.

Five qualities. Five medicines.

This could easily become a neat five-step program with a cheerful diagram at the end. Daaji does something much more interesting. Each prescription initially appears to improve the patient, until we slowly discover that the patient is precisely what is under investigation.

The patient, it turns out, is the self.

This is where Daaji succeeds in making Ashtavakra unusually accessible without domesticating him. It is perfectly possible to read



and even understand the philosophy of nonduality beautifully, and remain furious with one's brother, parent, colleague, or friend for years. One may discourse magnificently on detachment and still be offended because somebody failed to answer a WhatsApp message. There is a considerable distance between metaphysical understanding and Sunday lunch with the family or Monday morning at work for most of us.

Daaji puts the book squarely into that gap.

He shows us how forgiveness loosens the past, how sincerity closes the distance between who we are and the persona we perform, like an actor on the proverbial stage. He explains how compassion dissolves the hard frontier between "me" and "you," how contentment challenges the extraordinary authority we give circumstances over our inner states, and how truth eventually

He explains how compassion dissolves the hard frontier between "me" and "you," how contentment challenges the extraordinary authority we give circumstances over our inner states, and how truth eventually turns around and questions the one experiencing all of this.

turns around and questions the one experiencing all of this.

Who, exactly, is this I that has been offended, disappointed, praised, ignored, satisfied, dissatisfied, forgiven, and transformed?

This is where the book changes its scale. What began as five beautiful human qualities becomes an inquiry into consciousness itself.

And yet Daaji reaches this enormous question through almost embarrassingly ordinary situations: resentment, pretense, expectations, relationships, ambition, hurt, and desire.

These seemingly ordinary things acquire mass as we accumulate the heaviness of it. A grievance here, an expectation there, an identity we must defend, a role we have performed for so long that we no longer remember how or why it all began. Eventually their gravitational pull feels so natural that we simply call it "life."

Daaji's prescriptions work in the opposite direction. They remove weight. The book does not give you wings; it removes the ballast.

There are, of course, many moments in human life when the usual sense of self recedes. We know them in meditation, music, creativity, sport, love, beauty, and service—those rare intervals when the commentator inside us falls silent and we simply are. But the intriguing question is what happens afterward. The music stops. The meditation ends. Someone says precisely the wrong thing at breakfast, and our carefully reconstructed self reports immediately for duty.

Daaji is interested in that reconstruction.

His inquiry into how we rebuild our prisons again and again may be more useful than simply seeking

His inquiry into how we rebuild our prisons again and again may be more useful than simply seeking another fleeting experience of freedom.



another fleeting experience of freedom. That, for me, is where *Five Prescriptions for the Soul* becomes far more than a commentary on an ancient text. It offers a practical bridge between glimpsing something profound and becoming capable of living it.

Then, just when one might fear that all this nonduality is becoming terribly serious, Daaji does something rather unexpected. Throughout the book, he draws upon familiar scenes and characters from popular Indian films to illuminate Ashtavakra's ideas. *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, *Taare Zameen Par*, *Dear Zindagi*, *Rang De Basanti*, *Lagaan,* and *Anand* share pages with Sanskrit philosophy. On paper, the combination sounds improbable. In practice, it works remarkably well.

A Sanskrit concept may require several paragraphs of exposition, whereas a character or scene we have loved on a cinema screen already occupies a cherished place in Indians' collective emotional memory. The film references are not merely decorative, nor are they an attempt to make an ancient philosophy fashionable. Daaji uses their familiarity as a doorway. They allow an unfamiliar idea to land in familiar human experience.

At one point, Daaji revisits the film *Anand* through an entirely different philosophical lens. The movie has not changed. What has changed is the perspective from which we see it. In this way, Daaji offers a new entry point for readers who might otherwise never encounter this magnificent teaching.

For a Heartfulness practitioner, the book contains another layer of particular interest: Daaji maps the five prescriptions onto the five points, or chakras, of the heart, and their corresponding elements within the Heartfulness system. What initially appears to be an ethical sequence reveals itself as an inner geography of transformation.

The book is careful about the provenance of this map because it is not presented as something taken from classical yogic literature, but as experiential knowledge transmitted through the Heartfulness lineage. For Heartfulness practitioners, that distinction makes the exploration more interesting, since the qualities of forgiveness, sincerity, compassion, contentment, and truth have specific locations within our physical bodies and can be explored there through direct experience.

Here, Daaji bridges the distance between understanding nonduality as a philosophical truth and arriving at it through personal experience.

"If I am already free, why must I practice?" is not an unreasonable question. Nor is: "If the separate self is ultimately an illusion, who exactly is being liberated?"

This book offers a wonderfully unspectacular answer: Begin with the person you still cannot forgive. Notice where you are pretending. Notice whom your compassion does not include. Notice what you insist must happen before you permit yourself contentment. Then ask what is true. You do not have to begin with enlightenment. Yesterday's argument will do just fine.

Daaji bridges the distance between understanding nonduality as a philosophical truth and arriving at it through personal experience.



By the time we arrive at satya, the five prescriptions that appeared initially to be improving the self have now turned the light upon the self receiving the treatment. Daaji uses the image of a porter carrying luggage to illustrate the self, bearing its burdens: once the luggage has been dispensed with, what need is there for the porter?

The treatment has now consumed the patient. Perhaps that is why I found the book unusually powerful. As a contemporary culture, we are so addicted to addition. More knowledge, more achievement, more purpose, more productivity, more experience, more techniques, more optimization, even more extraordinary states of consciousness. We accumulate solutions to the burden of accumulation—only adding to our burden.

Daaji, with considerable elegance, proposes subtraction instead. One grievance less. One mask less. One boundary less fiercely defended. One outcome upon which happiness no longer depends. One illusion surrendered.

Perhaps this is the real achievement of *Five Prescriptions for the Soul*. Daaji does not so much bring Ashtavakra into the modern world as reveal that Ashtavakra never really left it. That ancient sage has been hiding in our marriages and meetings, our ambitions and disappointments, our prayers and our meditations, our movies, and our Sunday lunches and Monday mornings, lingering all the while, waiting patiently inside the stubborn little pronoun around which we arrange almost everything: "I."

Janaka thought freedom required one more acquisition. Our pharmacist sage, Daaji, gives him five medicines instead. One by one, they take something away and leave behind what we all need to discover. As I close my eyes and plunge into meditation, the book begins its work of unraveling within my heart.

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the HEARTFUL MIND with Daaji



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

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leadership

"The function of leadership
is to produce more leaders,
not more followers."

RALPH NADER



On **Bad** Communication

Why does communication break down during conflict, and how can patience, tolerance, and self-discipline help us maintain mutual respect through disagreement?

BY DR. ICHAK ADIZES

At Adizes Institute, we teach, train, and promote organizational health.

What is organizational health?

Integration is the sign of health. There is no loss of energy. The system functions fully. A disintegrated company signals poor organizational health. To heal organizations, we train people to reintegrate the company. We call them Certified Symbergetic™ Organizational Therapists.

Why don't people reintegrate on their own? Why does it require training and even certification? What is the problem?

The problem is that, for sustainable integration, a culture of mutual trust and respect is indispensable. But it is very difficult to act with mutual respect during conflict.

I see couples screaming at each other, talking at the same time, and then complaining that they don't communicate well.

Why does communication break down? There are many reasons. I present one here.

In the Hebrew language, when we write, we use only consonants. Through education and experience, the reader adds the vowels. Every word has a source expressed in three consonants. Those consonants reveal the word's source, which helps explain its meaning.

I found that the Hebrew words for patience, tolerance, and pain have the same three consonants as their source: SVL. The difference lies in the vowels.

ONE ROOT

S · V · L

Three words, told apart only by their vowels



SaVL

PATIENCE

Waiting for a solution to emerge from the discussion



SoVL

TOLERANCE

Listening to the end to someone you disagree with



SeVeL

PAIN

What being patient and tolerant asks of us

Here is how I believe they are related.

Respecting and interacting with someone who disagrees with you, and waiting for a solution to emerge from the discussion, requires **PATIENCE.**

But being patient is not enough.

You must also listen until the end to what someone you disagree with has to say. That requires **TOLERANCE**.

And being patient and tolerant while listening to someone you disagree with is **PAINFUL**. Especially for (P) and (E) styles. For (E)s, the pain is having to listen patiently to someone with whom you disagree. For (P)s, the pain is listening about something that does not produce immediate results.

A leader, if s/he is going to be an integrator (someone who creates a learning environment and practices mutual respect), must be trained to take pain and, as a result, be patient and tolerant.

That happens when we recognize the other party's sovereignty. And that is done by being patient enough to hear the other party to the end, tolerant of what you hear, and not immediately jumping to express your disagreements. During the discussion, be careful not to glance at your watch or show any pained facial expressions.

For that, self-discipline is required. **There is no good communication without discipline.**

Here is a short sample of how the Adizes Symbergetic™ Management methodology trains people to be patient, tolerant, and to handle pain.

The moment someone starts interrupting another person who is speaking, the more conscious and self-controlled person—even if not directly involved in the discussion—should immediately shout, "Hard Rules!" The parties must then comply.

THE PRACTICE

Hard Rules

Hard Rules: one person speaks, and no one is allowed to interrupt. When the speaker finishes and is the only one who knows they are finished, they pass the right to speak to the next person on their right. Notice: call the first person on the right even if that person raised his hand to speak last.

This requires (E) and (P) styles to wait for their turn to speak. That develops PATIENCE. In the meantime, as they wait their turn, they learn from others something they hadn't considered, and it increases mutual respect. By not interfering with what others are saying, waiting for their turn to speak, and learning something from others in the process, they develop TOLERANCE. And now here it is: how to reduce PAIN.



One cannot stop having pain by listening to someone who says things that you strongly disagree with. Since you cannot stop having pain, you need to learn how to control the pain.

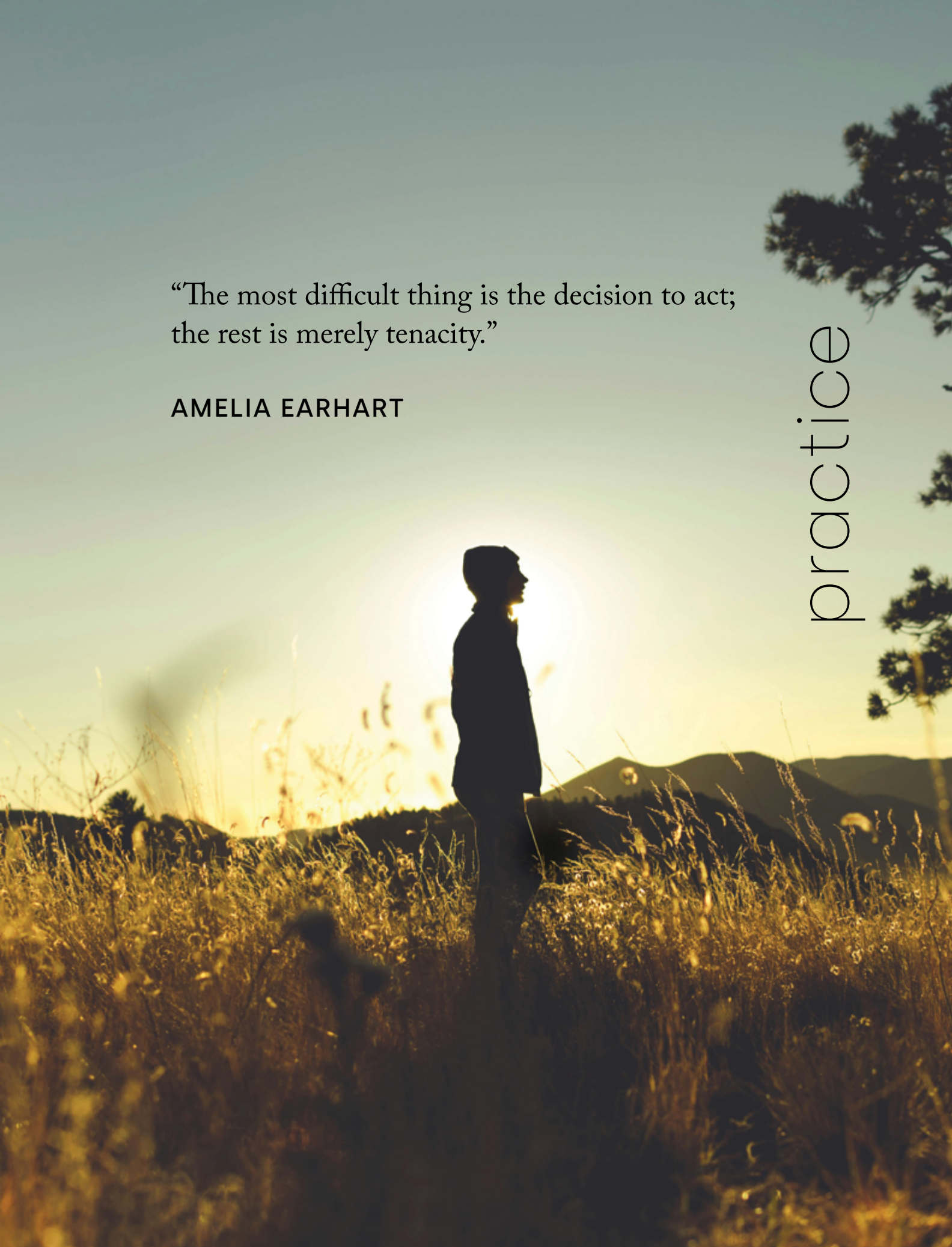
One releases the pain by showing it, by speaking in high tones and interrupting the other person.

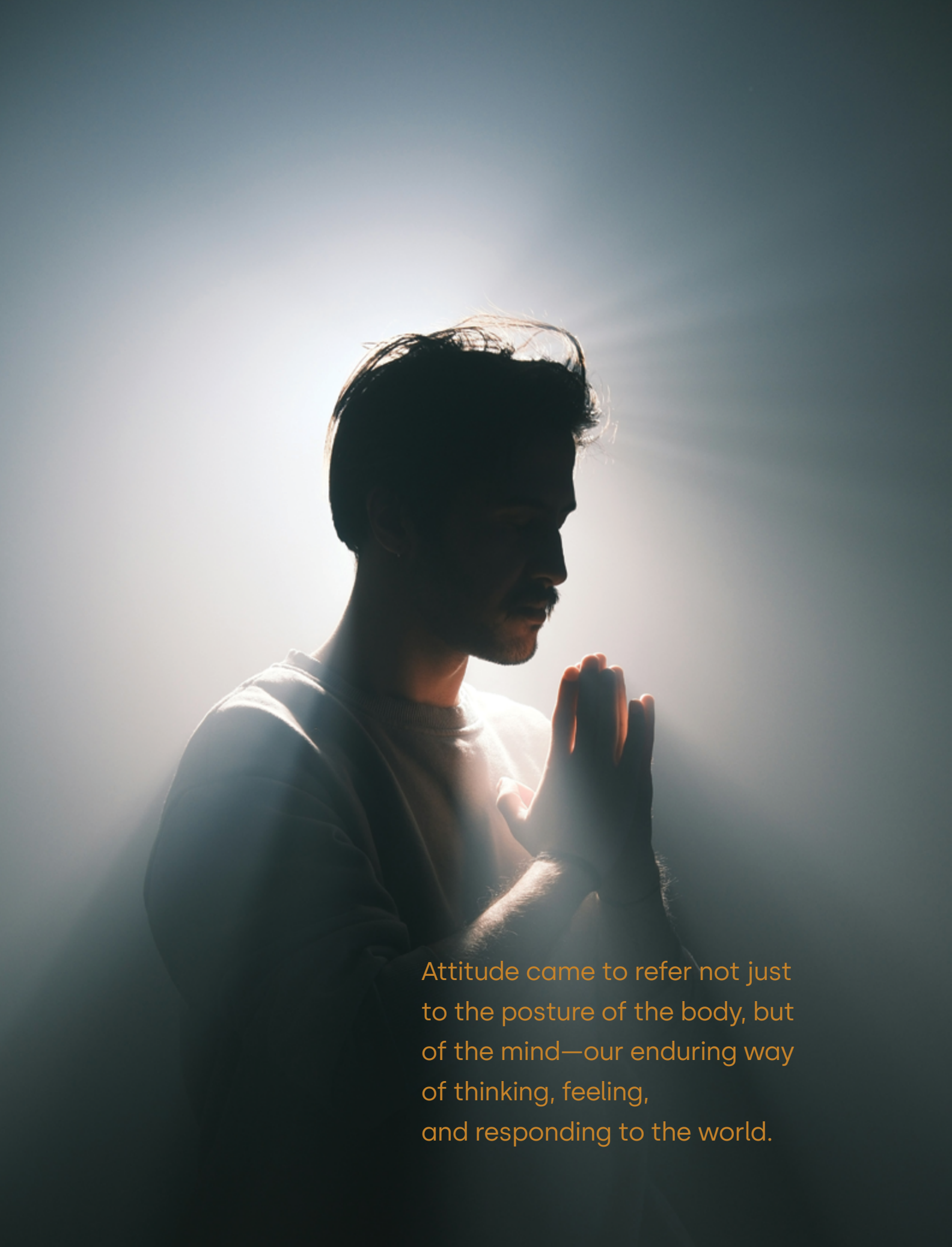
In Adizes, we free the pain not through the mouth but through the hands. In a meeting, you must have paper and pen. Write down how you feel because of the pain you have, like "This is nonsense... this is really upsetting me." Get all your emotions out on paper, but never share that page. By writing how you feel, you free yourself from those feelings. Try it.

Also write down your questions, doubts, and disagreements about what is being said. Then present only questions as questions. When you finish with questions, present your doubts as questions too, and when that is done, you might present your disagreements. This time should not be as a question, but a presentation presented quietly and respectfully.

If you can communicate with patience, tolerate differences in arguments or conclusions, and express your pain on paper that no one will see, you might have positive, constructive communication.

Good luck. I hope this helps.


"The most difficult thing is the decision to act;
the rest is merely tenacity."
AMELIA EARHART
practice



Attitude came to refer not just to the posture of the body, but of the mind—our enduring way of thinking, feeling, and responding to the world.

The 95 Percent

WHY ATTITUDE MATTERS IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Spiritual practice can easily become mechanical; attitude is what gives it the power to bring about lasting inner change.

BY N.S. NAGARAJA AND JOSHUA POLLOCK

> "The mechanics [of spiritual practice] are always repetitive. So what makes an endeavor come alive and develop vibrancy? It is attitude and interest. Attitude is 95 percent of success."
> —Daaji

Daaji often says that realizing our highest spiritual potential in this life requires not only sincere practice but the right attitude toward both practice and life. His formula is that regular practice accounts for five percent of our success, while attitude makes up the remaining 95 percent! A great deal, therefore, depends on understanding attitude. However, we must not view the five percent, practice, as a small addition to the 95 percent constituted by attitude. Rather, the 95 percent itself develops through practice and is sustained by it. Practice is the soil in which attitude grows.

What is Attitude?

The word *attitude* has made a remarkable journey through history. It began with the Latin *aptus*, meaning "well fitted," and evolved into the Italian *attitudine*, which Renaissance artists used to describe the expressive posture of a person or statue. French adopted it as *attitude*, and English borrowed it in the late seventeenth century with the same meaning: a bodily pose. Over time, people noticed that outer posture often mirrors inner state, and the word grew to carry that recognition. Attitude came to refer not just to the posture of the body, but of the mind—our enduring way of thinking, feeling, and responding to the world.

Psychology gives attitude a more precise meaning. It is a relatively enduring mental disposition toward a person, object, idea, or situation, built from three interconnected parts: what we think (beliefs), what we feel (emotions), and how we're inclined to act (behavioral tendency). An attitude,

then, is a consistent orientation toward an object that subtly guides the way we perceive, experience, and act in the world.

The Sanskrit word *manobhava* gives attitude greater depth. *Mano*, from *manas*, refers to the mind, while *bhava*, from the root *bhu*, "to be" or "to become," can mean a state or condition, a disposition, or a way of being. Manobhava, therefore, suggests more than a mental outlook: it is the inner disposition from which we think, feel, and act. This deeper sense is especially relevant in spiritual practice, where a consciously cultivated attitude gradually evolves into a condition of being and, ultimately, an enduring nature.

Yet, despite these different understandings of attitude, the practical question remains: what attitude does the spiritual journey ask of us—especially toward practice, a master, and life itself? Let us explore some key attitude factors the Heartfulness Masters have emphasized. This article covers only some of them, and just because something is unmentioned does not make it less important.

Twin Sisters

> "One quality that is vital in spiritual practice is cooperation. Imagine for a moment that we are trekking to the summit of Mount Everest, or that we are astronauts journeying into space. We accept the importance of following instructions in those situations. Also, we accept the importance of following a doctor's advice when we have a life-threatening illness. Similarly, on the spiritual journey it is important to follow a Guide who has mastered the journey, because we are traversing the inner universe."
> —Daaji

A seeker remains a student throughout the spiritual journey. We keep learning, and a student's attitude gives us a clue to what cooperation requires: openness, attention, and a willingness to be guided.

A seeker remains a student throughout the spiritual journey. We keep learning, and a student's attitude gives us a clue to what cooperation requires: openness, attention, and a willingness to be guided.

Cooperation is an attitude of the heart, a willingness to trust and follow the guidance we have chosen to receive. Think of a climber following a seasoned guide up Everest, or a patient trusting a doctor's care. We cooperate because we know the guide has walked this path and we haven't. On the spiritual journey, it is the same: we follow a master who has already crossed the inner terrain we are just beginning to explore. Cooperation means practicing the method sincerely rather than continually modifying it according to our own preferences.

Babuji gives this cooperation a practical form. Speaking of the Master's work of cleaning the *abhyasi* [practitioner], he says:

> "If there is complete cooperation, then the work is easy. Suppose I go on cleaning and the abhyasi goes on adding more and more grossness, then what can I do? So you see, the abhyasi must cooperate too. He must modify his life in such a way that it is helpful to his progress."
> —Babuji



Cooperation, in other words, is not only an inward disposition of trust. It also asks something of our behavior: not undoing with one hand what the Master is doing with the other.

Cooperation itself deepens. At first, it is deliberate: we choose to follow the method and the Master's guidance. As we practice and experience its effects, trust grows. We question and resist less; gratitude and love grow in their place. What began as a conscious effort to cooperate becomes spontaneous, until even the sense that "I am cooperating" begins to disappear.

Babuji describes this state in another way:

> "How do we know that our surrender is complete? It is when we begin to surrender naturally to all humanity… The main care of the abhyasi should be to acquire naturalness. Surrender and cooperation are twin sisters."
> —Babuji

At this point, cooperation and surrender are effectively synonymous. Surrender is cooperation that has become so natural that the awareness of cooperating has fallen away.

But humility underlies this whole process. Cooperation begins with recognizing that we do not know the way and that someone else sees farther than we do. That is humility. As humility deepens, it ripens into insignificance: not merely the thought that we are small, but a condition in which the sense of our own importance has dissolved before something vast. Insignificance is not low self-worth. It contains no desire for importance. Rather, it is a state in which any sense of personal importance is totally absent. In such a state, there can be no impulse to impose oneself or one's individual will. Without that impulse, the urges to assert, control, or resist also disappear, and cooperation becomes a spontaneous happening.



Here is one way to translate cooperation into daily practice:

Regularity and sincerity.

Inner change does not come by force. It comes through sincere, regular practice. Attending faithfully to practice, day after day, and following the practice as it has been given, without bargaining or shortcuts, is what allows progress to take root. Progress grows from a whole set of attitudes and from a willingness to follow the method. The results reveal themselves in time, but only to those who keep at it.

Not fighting the mind.

Spiritual practice involves a gentle attention of mind upon the method being used. The method is not an enemy to conquer or a battle to win. Suppressing thoughts or commanding the mind into silence only adds another dynamic of thought to the mix. A gentler approach lets thoughts pass by, like clouds in the sky, neutral and unbothered. A cooperative mind is a non-resisting mind. It lets the process settle on its own rather than being wrestled into shape.

Connecting from the heart, not the head.

The thinking mind loves to argue, analyze, and doubt. Setting it aside doesn't mean silencing the intellect, but only placing it in its proper role. The mind is meant to be a servant, not the master. When the heart's direct connection is trusted over the mind's endless commentary, the mind gradually stops interfering in work that was never its territory.

Dedication rather than renunciation.

The path does not ask you to give up home, relationships, or worldly life. It calls for an inner sense of dedication. When that takes root, everything else falls into place, and resistance transforms into cooperation. The outer life need not change; the inner orientation is what matters.

Initiating these simple steps also enables something further to unfold. What could that be? Let it be our discovery!

Three Companions

The Twin Sisters section looked at our attitude toward the Master. But a seeker also needs inner resources for the onward journey. Babuji names three:

> "Will, faith and confidence are the elementary factors which contribute to an easy success on the path of realization."
> —Babuji

Will and **confidence** are the more tangible elements of this triad. Will is what makes the movement possible at all, as it is the applying of oneself, again and again, to the practice. Confidence brings the firmness to face whatever the path uncovers: the working trust that lets us continue without needing every step justified in advance.

Twin Sisters asked us to trust the method enough to practice it sincerely. Faith is a different kind of trust: not trust in a technique we can test, but belief in what that technique ultimately means.

Faith is the harder companion to start with. Most paths ask for faith as belief: in values, in a system, in people, before experience has earned it. Daaji offers something different. Don't worry about faith, he says. Let your own experience and transformation guide its development—question as much as you like. Be a rigorous student of life. Experiment and let your own inner guide lead.

This is not faith demanded in advance. It is faith as an invitation to explore. Isn't it the most rational and scientific posture available to a seeker, since it demands that nothing be taken only on trust? Practice begins with a mere hypothesis, and asks the seeker only to keep experimenting with rigorous honesty about what the experiment shows.

How to develop it: developing will is straightforward: show up and apply oneself where the mind would rather not. Confidence develops the way any skill does: through action and the certainty that arrives through seeing its results. And faith is developed not by forcing or waiting for belief, but through sincere practice and by letting one's own transformation make its case.

Here, it is important to note what Daaji often says about will: If one takes interest in any task, one will bring more energy to it than if one approached it through discipline or willpower. In spiritual practice too, if one takes interest and keenly observes its effects, one will not have to struggle and force oneself to continue.

Will and confidence are the more tangible elements of this triad. Will is what makes the movement possible at all, as it is the applying of oneself, again and again, to the practice. Confidence brings the firmness to face whatever the path uncovers: the working trust that lets us continue without needing every step justified in advance.

Daaji offers an image in his book, *Spiritual Anatomy:* cultivating attitude is practice from the outside in, while meditation works from the inside out.

Mother Tinctures

Will, confidence, and faith are resources a seeker carries for the length of the journey. But attitude also manifests from moment to moment, in the disposition brought to each sitting, each day. Daaji names three dispositions of this kind. Daaji offers an image in his book, *Spiritual Anatomy*: cultivating attitude is practice from the outside in, while meditation works from the inside out. The two operate in tandem, like digging a well from above while the water rises from below. But we must remember: what we do accounts for five percent; the remaining 95 percent is the attitude with which we do it. And within that 95 percent, there are three core dispositions from which all other beneficial attitudes emerge. Daaji calls them "mother tinctures":

A sense of urgency

Focusing on what matters most in this moment, asking: "What is my goal, what do I need to do?" Each time this question surfaces, it leaves a ripple of restlessness in consciousness. Urgency is not anxiety; it is a positive driving force, the natural ally of spiritual restlessness.

Humility

The sublimated state of ego, where awareness of one's smallness before a greater ideal creates space within. When humility dawns, it creates a low-pressure area in the heart, and grace descends automatically to fill the void, exactly as wind rushes to fill a vacuum in the atmosphere.

Liveliness

A song in the heart, and a spring in the step. Sadness and heaviness close the heart; only a lively, open heart can flow freely. Transformation requires pliability of spirit, and pliability requires liveliness.

These three are not sequential stages. Each supports the others, and we nurture them at the same time. Urgency without humility becomes demanding. Humility without liveliness feels heavy. Liveliness without urgency lacks all direction.



Attitude's Ripening

A governing principle: an attitude does not remain an act of will. At first, it is a deliberate, sustained posture. We choose it repeatedly, often against resistance. Through spiritual practice, it settles into a condition, no longer chosen fresh each time but already present, awaiting only to be noticed. And finally, it ripens into one's nature. It is, simply, what one is.

Practice (deliberate posture) → **Habit** (settled condition) → **Nature** (spontaneous state)

All three sets of attitudes explored above trace this arc: cooperation ripening into surrender, three companions carried ever more lightly, and the mother tinctures maturing into second nature; this one governing principle appears three times, from three different angles.

Babuji names it once more from the side of the relationship with the Master: trust deepens into faith, and faith at its highest peak becomes surrender. Trust is posture. Faith is habit. Surrender is nature.

This is why attitude can be ninety-five percent of success and still not be something to strain after. The seeker's part is only ever the posture: sincere, deliberate, even effortful. That posture is not manufactured by further effort. It is what remains once effort has done its work and stepped aside. *I will do my part, and I will trust you with the rest.*

FROM HEARTFULNESS INSTITUTE

The Heartfulness Institute is a global not-for-profit offering heart-based meditation, a yogic practice for inner well-being and collective harmony.

heartfulness.org/global

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ecology

"Until we extend our circle of compassion to all living things, humanity will not find peace."

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

The Carbon Solution Is in Our Hands

The Carbon Net Zero Campus initiative combines renewable energy, water and waste management, ecological restoration, and community participation to turn schools into living laboratories for sustainability.

BY VIJAYAKUMAR KIDAMBI



When Forests by Heartfulness launched its Carbon Net Zero Campus initiative in May 2026 in India alongside the Government of Andhra Pradesh, it committed to two goals: to transform hundreds of Welfare Residential Institutions into carbon-neutral and biodiversity-rich campuses; and to nurture generations of sustainability champions by turning the campuses themselves into places of environmental learning.

When designing the end-to-end process for Carbon Net Zero Campus, Forests by Heartfulness ensured ongoing campus maintenance would be supported by the local community. In July 2026, over 400 participants—including local and government officials—took part in a Train the Trainer program to begin eco-management of local campuses. This approach allows neighbors to work together to keep campuses green while giving more people the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of climate and sustainability.

The carbon problem

Creating local sustainability experts first began by clarifying the why and the how: why the increase in carbon emissions is a critical problem and how carbon net-zero campuses are a positive solution.

Global temperatures and sea levels are rising, biodiversity is declining, food and water security are under increasing pressure, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. These issues are all exacerbated by carbon emissions, which are produced by industry and power plants, transportation, buildings, waste management, and fugitive emissions from fossil fuels.

While the magnitude of each issue seems immense, many practical solutions are already within reach.



Capacity building and community engagement

Each campus in the Carbon Net Zero Campus initiative is designated a *Living Laboratory*, where students and faculty members take a hands-on role in campus sustainability and maintenance. Forests by Heartfulness has set up a four-tier engagement framework that allows all members of a campus community to be actively involved in biodiversity maintenance:



Students: learn net-zero and sustainable practices, participate in hands-on projects, and develop environmental responsibility



Classrooms: integrate sustainability into subjects and encourage peer and project-based learning



Principals and teachers: establish policies and green campus practices and monitor their implementation



Community: extends knowledge and sustainability culture beyond the campus and into the local community and economy

The *Living Laboratory* model extends across five areas of campus life: energy, rainwater harvesting, wastewater management, solid waste, and biodiversity.

Energy independence

In just one hour, the sun provides enough energy to the Earth to meet the world's energy needs for a full year. Solar energy is one of the most practical ways for campuses to reduce their dependence on fossil-fuel-based electricity.

Solar energy is essential in combating climate change for several reasons:

- Grid electricity largely comes from fossil fuels like coal
- As schools adopt digital learning, electricity demand increases
- Higher electricity costs leave fewer resources available for education
- Every unit of grid electricity used adds to a school's carbon footprint
- Solar lowers costs, reduces emissions, and supports net-zero campuses

Forests by Heartfulness addresses these needs through rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and metering systems.



Rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling

When captured, stored, and recharged correctly, harvested rainwater provides several environmental, financial, and biological benefits, including greater water security through reduced dependence on tankers and borewells, groundwater recharge, flood and waterlogging control, resource recovery to support gardens and planting, and overall climate resilience.

To capture sufficient rainwater, Forests by Heartfulness employs three methods:



Rooftop harvesting: rainwater that flows from building roofs through gutters or pipes to storage tanks or recharge structures



Surface runoff harvesting: rainwater from open campus surfaces directed into percolation pits, trenches, or ponds



Storage and recharge: captured water is stored for non-potable use or sent to recharge structures to replenish groundwater

Graywater and blackwater management

Many schools utilize freshwater for consumption, sanitation, kitchens and hostels, landscaping, and other significant needs. On many rural campuses, the resulting wastewater includes graywater and blackwater, which can cause groundwater contamination, stagnant water, and health risks if not properly managed.

Forests by Heartfulness has a unique treatment process that allows graywater and blackwater to be treated and safely reused for both potable and non-potable purposes or safely discharged. The treatment process includes four stages:

- **Primary Treatment:** septic and biological action
- **Secondary Treatment:** dissolved air flotation
- **Advanced Filtration:** reverse osmosis and ultraviolet (UV) treatment
- **Recovery and Use:** recycled water for parks and landscaping, with dissolved oxygen progressively increased and pollutants removed until the water is safe for reuse.



Solid waste management and circular economy

Each day, a school can generate 45–50 kg of solid waste, including food and kitchen waste, paper and plastic, sanitary waste, and garden waste.

When this waste is not properly managed, it can contribute to water and air pollution, mosquito and fly infestations, unpleasant odors, and other environmental problems.

Forests by Heartfulness uses a four-bin system:



Wet waste, for composting: leftover fruits, vegetables, and other food, leaves, and flowers



Dry waste, for recycling: plastic bottles, cardboard, paper, notebooks, metal cans



Sanitary waste, red bin for girls' washrooms: sanitary pads and related items



Reject waste, for municipality waste: electrical items, textiles

Greening of unused spaces

One of the main goals of the Carbon Net Zero Campus initiative is to move beyond conventional tree planting and adopt a scientific, site-specific approach by planting native and indigenous species that support local land, soil, water, and climate conditions.

With this approach, climate advocates empathize with the native land and understand the biodiversity it needs to thrive for generations to come.

The planting strategy combines several complementary approaches:

- **Ultra-High-Density Planting:** dense, forest-like native plantings for carbon sequestration, biodiversity, microclimate benefits
- **Periphery Plantation:** boundary planting as windbreak, shade, dust/noise barrier
- **Fruit and High-Value Timber Plantation:** food, biomass, carbon capture, future timber
- **Avenue Trees:** shaded walkways along paths and roads
- **Herbal Garden:** Indian medicinal plants for education and health value
- **Mosquito-Repellent and Immunity-Boosting Garden:** hygiene and air quality
- **Pollinator Garden:** flowering plants supporting bees and pollination
- **Butterfly Garden:** entrance plantings for biodiversity and aesthetics
- **Nutrition and Vegetable Garden:** hands-on food-growing experience for students



The solution is in our hands

The Forests by Heartfulness team is applying all of these solutions across the selected campuses within the Carbon Net Zero Campus initiative, encouraging students, teachers, and local community members alike to reflect on easy steps they can take and share with others to reduce the detrimental impacts of continued carbon emissions.

By involving local communities in the work of making campuses more sustainable, we are reminded both how essential and how easy it is to work together to create tangible, long-term, and sustainable change.

FROM FORESTS BY HEARTFULNESS

Forests by Heartfulness nurtures and protects native, endemic, and endangered plant species through expert-guided nurseries, plantation drives, long-term monitoring, and community participation.

heartfulness.org/forests

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guidance

"Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart."

RAINER MARIA RILKE



Are You Willing to Be Changed?

In February 2026, DAAJI received a series of thought-provoking questions from DR. ICHAK ADIZES about the Heartfulness prayer. Their exchange explores the nature of wishes and expectations, the meaning of "Master," and what it means to remain open to transformation.

BY **DAAJI**

The first question: on wishes, desires, and expectations

Q: The Heartfulness prayer says, "We are yet but slaves of wishes putting bar to our advancement." I am not clear which word is legitimate here: is it wishes, wants, or expectations that block our way to God, which is love?

Let's assume it is all three—wishes, wants, and expectations—that undermine love. But what is blocking India's development? I think it is that we should stop expecting. Wanting and wishing are okay; we can surrender those more easily, whereas expecting has a component of control. We expect the other party to behave in a certain way or for something to happen, in which case we are subconsciously wishing to control God. It is okay to wish and want. In fact, that is what drives development. But it is not okay to expect.

Daaji: Let me first lay out the prayer so we can see its structure clearly:

O Master!
Thou art the real goal of human life.
We are yet but slaves of wishes
putting bar to our advancement.
Thou art the only God and Power
to bring us up to that stage.

It is okay to wish and want. In fact, that is what drives development. But it is not okay to expect.

There are six lines and no excess. Every word carries the weight of centuries of inner exploration. Now, let us enter.

Line three: "We are yet but slaves of wishes"

Notice what this line does *not* say. It does not say, "We have wishes that block our way"; it does not say, "Wishes are bad"; and it does not say, "Stop wishing." It simply says that we are *slaves* of wishes.



The focus is on enslavement, not on the wishes themselves. That is precisely why the words "yet but" appear. These two small words carry an ocean of meaning. "Yet" speaks of time and potential; we are slaves for *now*, not forever. "But" adds a qualifier; we are *merely* slaves, not hopelessly so. Together, "yet but" is both an honest diagnosis and a quiet promise. It says, this is your present condition, not your permanent one.

When I wish a better life for my children, it is simply natural and how it must be. A parent who does not wish well for a child has something missing in their heart. The wish itself is life-affirming. It is the sap of being human. Even the wish for liberation is a wish. The aspiration for selfless service contains an aspiration. The breath wishes to flow, and the heart wishes to love.

But when that natural wish becomes an obsession, something changes. The parent who wishes well for their child begins scripting that child's entire life. A wish for the child's happiness curdles into a demand for the child's compliance. And now the very person for whom you are wishing becomes nauseated. The wish that began as love has become a cage, not just for you, but for them too.

This is the progression the prayer warns against:

> Wish, which matures into
> Desire, which hardens into
> Expectation, which escalates into
> Demand, which calcifies into
> Insistence ("It is my right"), which collapses into
> Isolation and Guilt.

The prayer catches the development of bondage at the first stage, wishing, rather than waiting for expectation, which is already the third station down the line. It doesn't even wait for desire, which has already gained momentum. Instead, it prevents escalation at the very first whisper, the *wish*, the seed before the tree.



The prayer catches the development of bondage at the first stage, wishing, rather than waiting for expectation.

Babuji's precision here is that of a master gardener who removes a weed at the root, before it has sent out runners. You suggest we keep wishing but stop expecting. That is like saying, "Let the seed germinate, let it take root, let it begin to grow, but do not let it flower." By the time you are trying to manage expectations, you are already deep in the garden of desire, pulling at branches while the root system spreads underground.

The Science Behind the Capture

Neuroscience has illuminated this progression with remarkable precision. At the University of Michigan, Professor Kent Berridge and his colleagues spent decades investigating the distinction between "wanting" and "liking." Their discovery overturned the fundamental assumption that dopamine, the famous neurotransmitter, mediates pleasure, because it does not.

Dopamine mediates *wanting*, not *liking*. The brain systems associated with pursuing something are distinct from those associated with enjoying it. The wanting system, driven by dopamine in the mesolimbic pathway, is robust, powerful, and easily sensitized. The liking system, involving tiny "hedonic hotspots" that generate actual pleasure, is small and fragile.

This means we can want something intensely without liking it. We can pursue something compulsively without enjoying it. Every smoker who reaches for a cigarette while knowing it gives no real satisfaction understands this. Every person who scrolls through social media for hours,



feeling worse with each passing minute, has lived this neuroscience firsthand.

Seen through this lens, the slave of wishes is caught in a sensitized system of wanting. An arising wish readily triggers the pursuit mechanism. There is little space for wisdom to intervene, for the soul to choose. The wanting system has captured the organism.

A free person experiences the same wishes, but in a different way. The wanting may arise, but there is space around it. In that space, the person can observe, "A wish has appeared," so that wish does not automatically translate into pursuit. It can be noted, felt, and released. The person remains the master of attention rather than its servant.



This is the witnessing state: the wish arises, it is seen, and it passes. Nothing is fought, and nothing is grasped.

The ancient tradition captured this distinction in a verse a neuroscientist could have written:

इच्छा शुद्धा भवेद् यस्य सा मुक्तिः परमा मता ।
कामना बन्धनं प्रोक्तं मुक्तिस्तस्याः परित्यजेत् ॥

Iccha shuddha bhaved yasya sa
muktih parama mata
Kamana bandhanam proktam
muktis tasyah parityajet.

When intention remains pure and unattached,
that itself is supreme liberation.
Desire that binds is bondage; freedom comes
from releasing its grip.

A pure wish is fine; it is natural, and it is life itself moving. But when desire takes possession, when desire becomes the master of the one who desires, this is bondage. The Heartfulness prayer addresses that transition point. It says, notice where you move from having a wish to being had by a wish.

The second question: on the word "Master"

Q: Daaji, the word "Master" is a problem. Are we praying to be like you? I doubt that is what you want, as it will then be a personality cult. Chariji told me that the true Master is God. But then that creates a new problem: do we pray to be like God?

The answer, I think, is that we all want to be happy, and it is expectations that undermine happiness. And what is happiness? Total integration. And what is total integration? *Love.*

God is love, so could the prayer be written as, "Love, you are the ultimate goal. It is expectations that undermine love, and love is the way to get to love, because love is a muscle"? What do you think?

Daaji: Now to the question that troubles many modern minds: why do we address the prayer to "Master"? Does this not create a personality cult? Let me offer an analogy that may illuminate.

A pure wish is fine; it is natural, and it is life itself moving. But when desire takes possession, when desire becomes the master of the one who desires, this is bondage. The Heartfulness prayer addresses that transition point. It says, notice where you move from having a wish to being had by a wish.

An analogy from the Adizes methodology

Imagine, for a moment, that the Adizes methodology for organizational transformation is universally adopted so that every corporation, every government, and every school uses it. It becomes a household name. Children grow up learning the principles of integration, mutual trust and respect, and complementary teams. And because the methodology works, because it genuinely produces healthier organizations and happier people, naturally, everyone begins to admire Dr. Adizes. His name becomes synonymous with integration itself. Now, from the outside, this might look like a personality cult. "Everyone adores Dr. Adizes!" a critic might say. "This is hero worship."

But when we look deeper, what are people actually admiring? Not the man's personality, his preferences, or his quirks; they are admiring what the methodology *produces* in them. They are admiring the state of integration they experience when they apply the principles. You would be the first to say, do not worship me. Instead, understand the methodology, apply it, and become integrated yourself. That is the whole point.

Now, suppose someone powerful, perhaps even a head of state, takes exception to the methodology, not because they have studied it thoroughly and found it lacking, but because it threatens their existing way of operating. Their ego resists the change the methodology demands. They make noise, create controversy, and politicize what is simply a tool for human flourishing. What would we say? We would pray that they understand the methodology completely before making noise, not because Dr. Adizes needs defending, but because an incomplete understanding, combined with a powerful platform of being a top leader, can cause harm to millions who would have benefited. The methodology stands or falls on its own merit.

This is exactly the situation with the word "Master" in the prayer. The Master in Heartfulness is not asking to be worshipped. Babuji was unequivocal on this point. He said, "I do not make slaves, I make masters." The goal is not followers; it is for every practitioner to become a master themselves. A real master only produces masters. This is the litmus test that separates authentic spiritual guidance from a personality cult.

When we say, "O Master!" we are not bowing to a personality. We are orienting toward *a state of consciousness* that the realized being of the Master embodies. We are saying, this is what a human being can become, and this is what I aspire to become. It is not about personality, style, or mannerisms. It is about inner condition, the realized state, and the consciousness he has uncovered. It is the difference between worshipping a doctor and following the treatment, between idolizing a coach and practicing the drills, or between venerating the map and walking the territory.

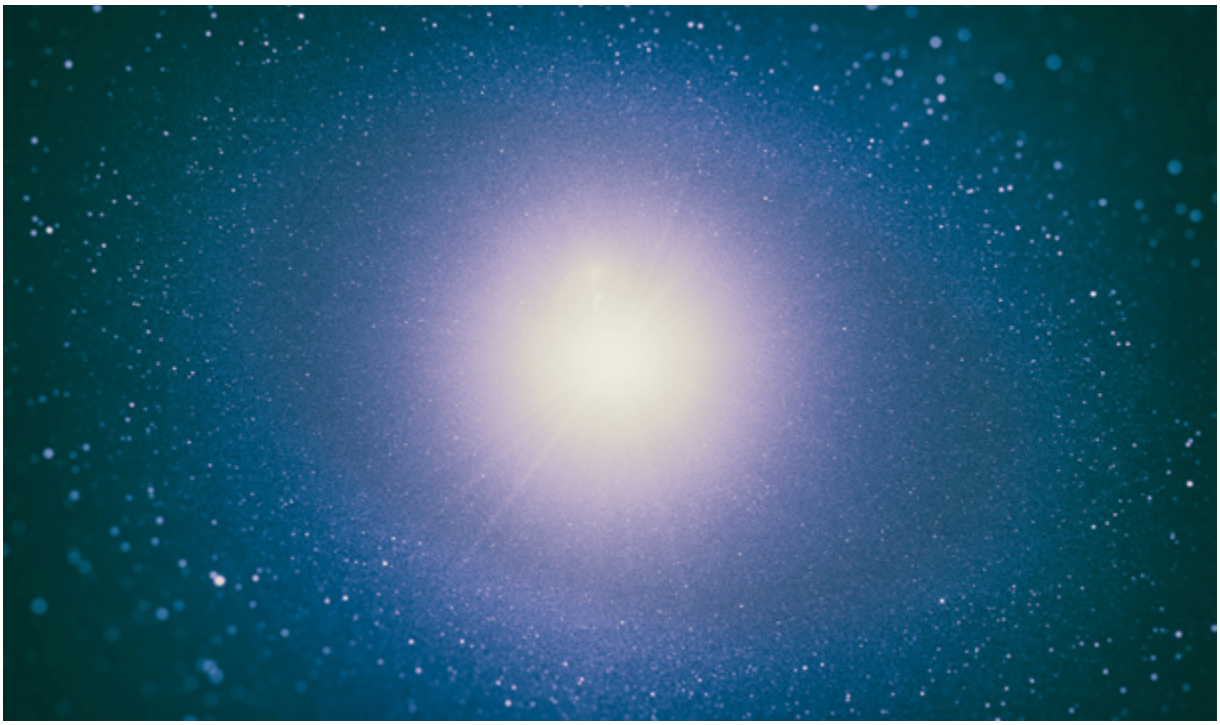
How the bridge works

So, why do we need a person at all? Why not simply orient toward God directly, toward Love directly, toward the Absolute?

Here is the paradox every genuine spiritual tradition faces. The Absolute is infinite, formless, and beyond conception. How do we as finite beings relate to the Infinite? A cosmic force cannot look into your eyes. A philosophical concept cannot wipe your tears. An abstract principle cannot sit across from you and transmit something from its heart to yours.

Carl Sagan explored this paradox in his science fiction novel, Contact. When Ellie Arroway finally meets the alien intelligence, it appears as her deceased father, not because the intelligence is her father, but because that form allows meaningful connection. The Infinite understood what the mystics have always known: relationship requires a form the heart can embrace.

When we say, "O Master!" we are not bowing to a personality. We are orienting toward a state of consciousness that the realized being of the Master embodies. We are saying, this is what a human being can become, and this is what I aspire to become. It is not about personality, style, or mannerisms. It is about inner condition, the realized state, and the consciousness he has uncovered.



Dr. Giacomo Rizzolatti's discovery of mirror neurons revealed a neural mechanism of resonance between observer and observed. When we watch another person act, some of the same neural circuitry involved in performing that action becomes active in us. The brain is wired for this kind of resonance. What neuroscience demonstrates at the neural level, Yogic Transmission accomplishes more profoundly at the level of consciousness itself.

When you sit with a realized being or hold them in your awareness, something transfers. It is not their personality, nor their opinions. It is their inner condition. Consciousness awakens consciousness. Realization calls to the potential for realization within you.

The Master does not stand between the seeker and the Divine. Rather, the Master serves as a living bridge, helping the seeker become receptive to the Divine.

And we walk this living bridge on our journey to the Infinite.

Babuji himself wrote with characteristic humility, "I only try to invoke God's blessings by means of prayer through the medium of my Master. Thus, I can in no way be called a Master in this respect. I may, however, be only a helping factor in the spiritual growth."

A genuine master does not claim the role. A genuine master is a doorway, not a destination; a ladder, not a throne. Once you have reached the roof, you do not worship the ladder, but while climbing, you would be foolish to kick it away.

The question of a cult

A cult operates through fear, dependency, control, and the suppression of questioning, whereas love does the opposite. Love liberates. Love makes you more yourself, not less. Love encourages questioning, because truth has nothing to fear from inquiry.



When the relationship between seeker and guide operates through love, it cannot be a cult. Love is incompatible with fear, coercion, enforced dependency, and the suppression of questioning. A cult produces identical copies, whereas love produces unique expressions. A cult demands uniformity, whereas love celebrates diversity. A cult tells you to remain as you are, dependent on me, whereas love tells you to become what you are meant to be, even if that means outgrowing me.

We must give credit to the idea of the goal we had in the beginning. God, the Master, and Love do not ask to be worshipped; they ask that you *become like that.*

A personal encounter and what stands between

The question of the Master also has a practical dimension: the role of personal encounter in transformation.

It is easy to absorb the concept of love intellectually, and it is easy to grasp the idea of a management methodology on paper. But to get to the heart of any transformative philosophy, we must absorb the lessons with love, with acceptance, and with the willingness to be changed by what we encounter.

Here is where the real resistance lives, not in the methodology, not in the prayer, and not in the concepts of God, Master, and Love. The resistance lives in what stands between the integrated self and the non-integrated self, between the evolved self and the present self, and between what we are and what we could become.

Between them stand two things:

1. The static state that does not want to move or change.

In Sanskrit, this is called तमस [tamas], the inertia that resists all transformation. It is comfortable where it is; it has arranged the furniture; and it does not want anyone rearranging the room, even if the room is a prison. The inconvenience of change and transformation is real. Growth hurts. The caterpillar's dissolution inside the cocoon is not a metaphor for comfort.

2. The individual ego that distorts vision.

The ego does not see clearly. It sees through the lens of "what does this mean for me?" that bends every truth into something self-serving.

These two forces, inertia and ego, conspire so that we interpret the prayer as a threat rather than an invitation, so that "O Master" sounds like subservience rather than aspiration. They interpret "slaves of wishes" as condemnation rather than an honest diagnosis. And they interpret "Thou art the only God and Power" as helplessness rather than the most courageous surrender a human being can make.

Now, a personal encounter with the Master cuts through both. When you sit with someone who has realized what the prayer describes, the messages of ego and inertia are disproved. The heart recognizes what the mind resists.

Babuji conveys to us that "the Master can do everything, yes; he can do a lot, but not in spite of yourself. The absence of will and perseverance delays your progress. Work on yourself! Be malleable!"

This is not cult language. It is the language of transformation: be willing to change, and be willing to be changed. Learn to distinguish genuine discernment from resistance to change. Do not mistake your comfort for contentment.

The heart of the matter

You have conveyed that love is the goal, love is the path, love is the means, and love is a muscle. This is beautiful and correct. But the description of a muscle in a textbook never made anyone stronger. We must lift, we must practice, and practice requires structure, guidance, and yes, a relationship with one who has already traveled the path.

The prayer provides the structure and the exercise. The Master provides the living example. And love, which is both the fuel and the destination, grows stronger with each day of sincere offering.

Expectations alone do not undermine love. It is enslavement to any movement of the mind that pulls us away from the present, from the heart, from the Real. Expectations are a symptom while the prayer treats the cause.

The prayer is not a cage. It is the key.

The prayer provides the structure and the exercise. The Master provides the living example. And love, which is both the fuel and the destination, grows stronger with each day of sincere offering.



A note on India's development

One more thing: you connect expectations with the question of India's development. I would frame the issue somewhat differently. What holds India back, or any individual or nation, is not authentic detachment, but the counterfeit of detachment: inertia dressed in spiritual clothing.

Krishna pushes Arjuna to act with full vigor while remaining inwardly free, not to renounce action. The surgeon whose hands are steadiest has released the fear of failure. The clearest leader is unclouded by personal ambition. In Heartfulness, detachment and practice are not opposites; they are partners: freedom and engagement, surrender and dynamism—like the lotus, rooted in mud while flowering in sunlight.

In closing

The prayer is not asking us to become wish-less beings, hollow and unmotivated, drained of ambition and vitality. It is asking us to become free beings, fully alive, fully engaged, fully loving, and fully free.

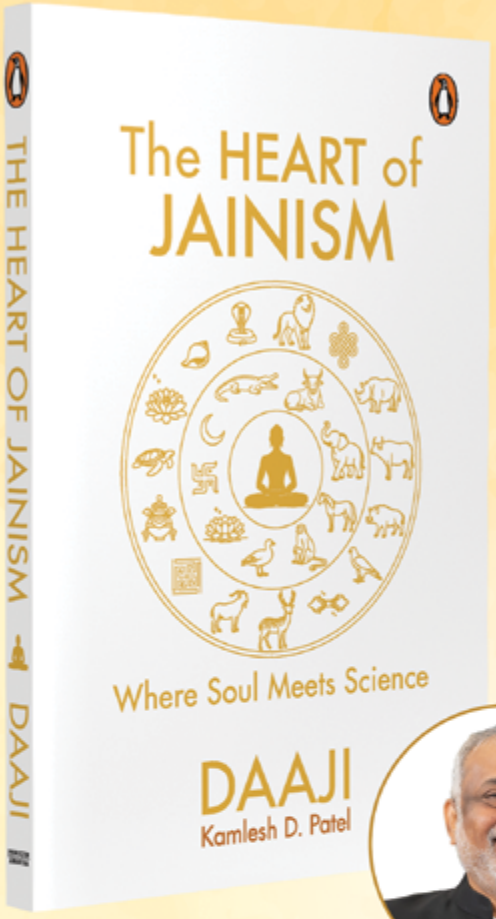
The difference between a slave of wishes and a free person is not the absence of wishes. It is the presence of *awareness*. Let me share some more of Babuji's wisdom: "Freedom and feeling cannot remain together. If freedom is there in its naked form, the feeling will be away from it."

The moment we desire the feeling of freedom, we have created another wish that can enslave us. True freedom is not an experience to be pursued; it is a state to be lived, so natural that even the awareness of it dissolves. With absolute clarity, Babuji declares, "Freedom from freedom is the real freedom."

FROM DAAJI

Daaji is the global guide of Heartfulness and president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

daaji.org



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education

"The child who has never learned to work by himself, to set his own goals, and to act on them, will never become a normal adult."

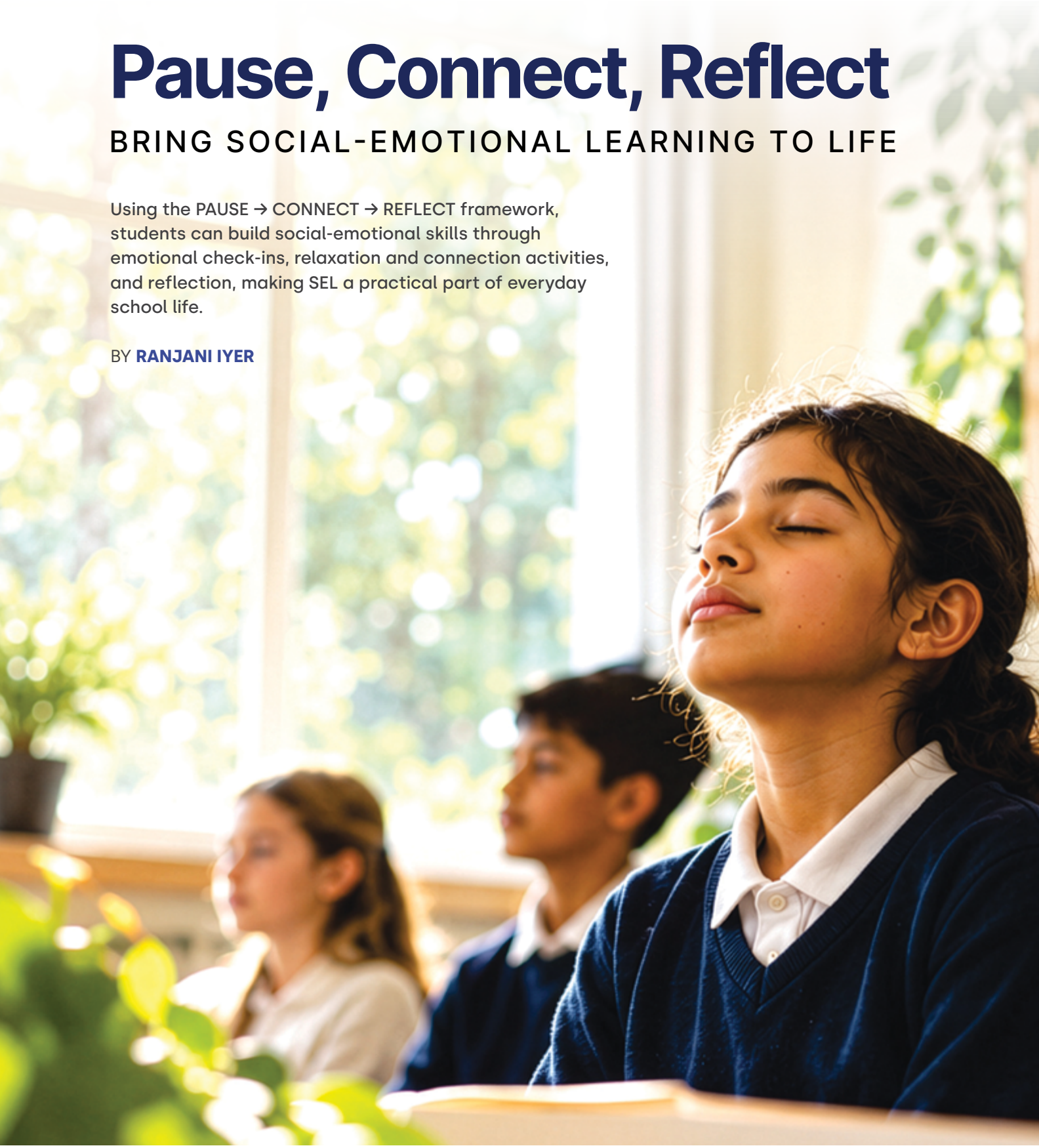
JESS LAIR

Pause, Connect, Reflect

BRING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING TO LIFE

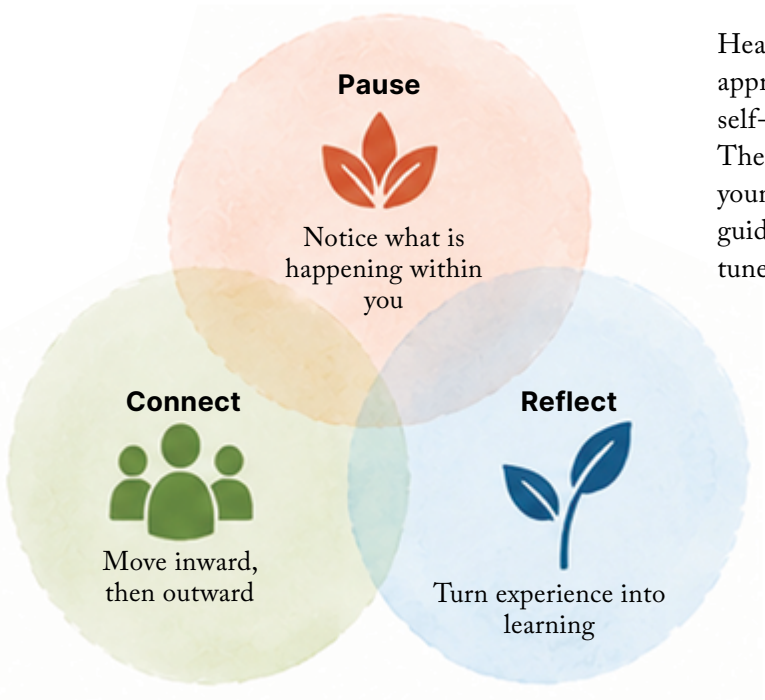
Using the PAUSE → CONNECT → REFLECT framework, students can build social-emotional skills through emotional check-ins, relaxation and connection activities, and reflection, making SEL a practical part of everyday school life.

BY **RANJANI IYER**



We often talk about social-emotional learning (SEL) as a collection of skills: self-awareness, self-management, empathy, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. But children rarely develop these capacities by simply being told about them. We learn to listen by listening, to regulate ourselves by practicing regulation, and to understand others by experiencing meaningful connection.

Over the years, our experience has taught us that social-emotional learning becomes most powerful when it moves from knowing to experiencing. A child may understand what empathy means, but the deeper learning happens when they pause to listen to a classmate's experience. A student may know that breathing can help with stress, but the learning becomes real when they actually use the practice before a challenging moment. The Heartfulness Program for Schools approach brings this experiential dimension to life through a simple framework: PAUSE ➔ CONNECT ➔ REFLECT.





PAUSE: Begin by noticing

The first step is developing the ability to notice what is happening within us. A classroom might begin with a simple question: H*ow are you feeling today?* Students may identify an emotion, share something they are grateful for, or simply pause and notice what is present.

These moments can seem deceptively simple. Yet naming an emotion creates some distance from it. "I am angry" can gradually become "I notice that I am feeling angry." That small shift can create the possibility of choice.

Heartful Schools has long incorporated age-appropriate activities around emotions, positivity, self-observation, journaling, and decision-making. The existing curriculum ranges from helping younger children recognize and face emotions to guiding older students to observe themselves and tune in to their hearts when making decisions.



CONNECT: Move inward, then outward

Awareness naturally creates an opportunity for connection. Students can begin with a simple relaxation or breathing practice to help the body and mind settle. From there, the experience can move outward through partner listening, appreciation activities, meditation, kindness circles, collaborative challenges, or problem-solving.

The important element is that these are experiences, not lectures. Students are not merely told to be compassionate; they experience what it means to listen without interrupting. They are not simply instructed to collaborate; they encounter different perspectives while solving a problem together.

In one Heartful Schools activity, for example, students might work together to build or create something, encounter disagreement, revise their approach, and discover that the quality of their communication affects the outcome. The SEL learning is embedded in the experience itself.

This is also why movement, art, stories, games, journaling, and creative projects have such an important place in the approach. Heartfulness programs intentionally use engaging activities to help students discover values and social-emotional capacities through participation and self-discovery rather than preaching.



REFLECT: Turn experience into learning

The third step is often the one we overlook: reflection.

After an experience, students can ask: *What did I notice? What did I learn about myself? How did I affect someone else? What would I do differently next time?*

Reflection transforms an activity into learning. A student who recognizes, "I became frustrated when my idea wasn't accepted, but taking a breath helped me listen to someone else's idea," has learned something they can carry into the next classroom, friendship, competition, or family interaction.

This three-step process can happen within 10 minutes. A simple morning circle can include a two-minute emotional check-in, four minutes of relaxation and connection, and two minutes of reflection or intention-setting. The Heartful Schools model has used this adaptable structure in school and summer settings, making it possible to integrate SEL without creating another large curriculum burden.



A simple practice for everyone

The beauty of Pause ➔ Connect ➔ Reflect is that it does not belong only in a formal SEL lesson. A teacher can use it before a difficult class. A parent can use it after a disagreement. A school leader can use it to begin a staff meeting.

Pause: What am I noticing in myself right now?

Connect: Can I pause, breathe, listen, meditate, or connect before I respond?

Reflect: What did I learn, and what intention will I carry forward?

This can take five minutes or less.

We have seen how these simple practices can become part of a larger school culture. For example, schools can combine intentional positivity, self-care activities, student leadership, and Heartfulness practices to create opportunities for students and staff to feel seen, heard, and valued. Similarly, Heartfulness resources and lessons are designed to create a welcoming space where the school communities build emotional awareness, strengthen positive peer relationships, and develop self-confidence and resilience.

This is the real promise of experiential SEL: we stop treating emotional and social development as something students are supposed to know and begin creating opportunities for them to practice it every day.

The goal is not to create perfectly calm children or eliminate difficult emotions. It is to help young people develop the awareness to notice, the tools to regulate, the courage to connect, and the wisdom to reflect.

When these experiences become part of the rhythm of school life, SEL is no longer another program added to the curriculum. It becomes a way of learning, relating, and growing. And perhaps that is where education becomes truly holistic: not when we add more to what children learn, but when we transform how they experience learning and themselves within it.

FROM THE HEARTFULNESS PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

The Heartfulness Program for Schools cultivates lifelong skills for emotional well-being, self-awareness, resilience, empathy, and compassionate leadership through evidence-based practices, educator support, and whole-school implementation that enables students and school communities to flourish.

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All Knowledge Stems From the Heart





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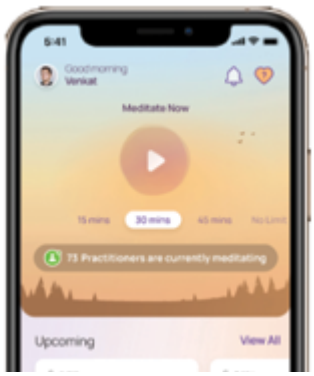




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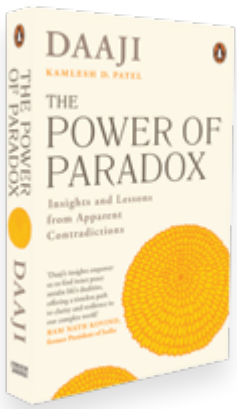
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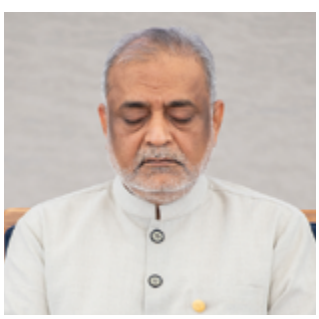




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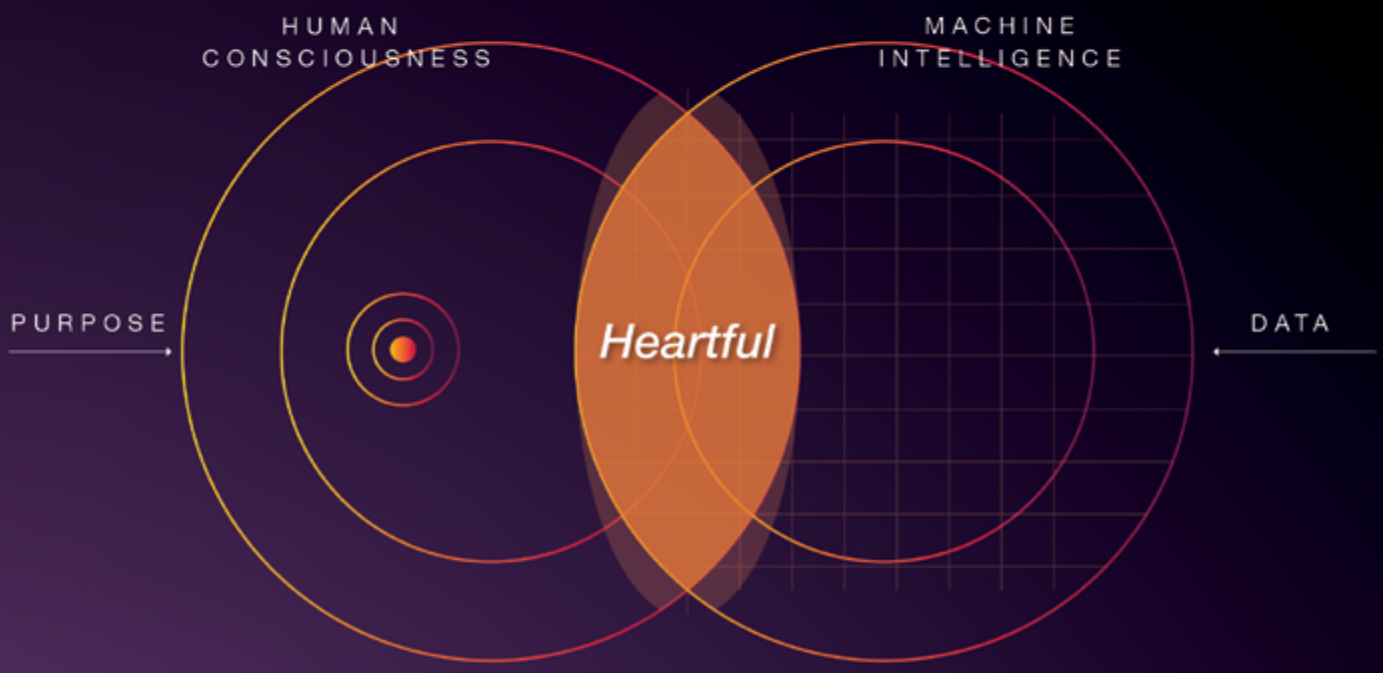
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