

NOVEMBER 2016

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

COMPASSION

Dr James Doty on why it is ingrained in our evolution

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

A holistic approach to cancer recovery

MYANMAR

Images of Buddhism in everyday life

SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM

Daaji on space, time and the creation of the universe



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SELF ● RELATIONSHIPS ● WORK ● INSPIRATION ● VITALITY ● NATURE

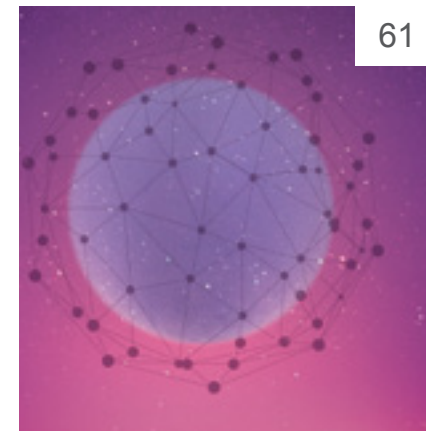
INCREASES EMOTIONAL STABILITY and balance



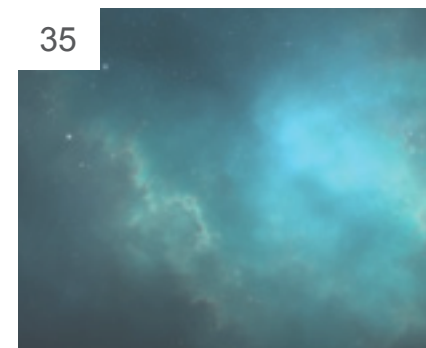
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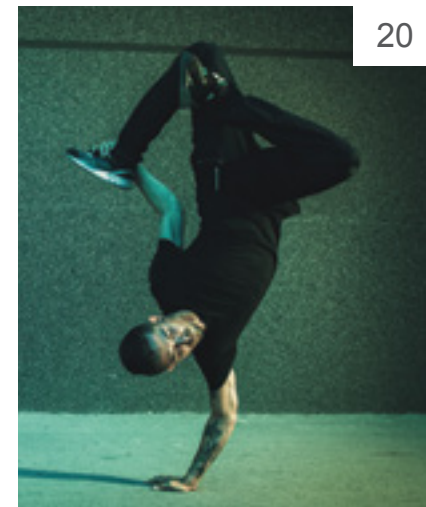
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61



35



20



10



43



32



50

INSIDE

- 10 Between stimulus and response
- 17 Yogic principles in business
- 20 Miserable and magical for paradoxical times
- 29 The art of connection: how our heart is in every moment of meeting
- 32 Flow and equilibrium
- 35 The evolution of consciousness
- 43 An integrative foundation to healing
- 50 Buddhism in Myanmar
- 61 The magic of unseen laws
- 66 Improving blood circulation
- 68 Writing my way to peace
- 72 Love is always here and now

FOR CHILDREN

- 76 Pete, the blower of bubbles, part ii
- 82 Flying kiss flipbook

Connect with the Source through prayer



Heartfulness
Through meditation, connection

On one hand prayer is the way to connect with your deepest Self through the heart – to dive so deep that you connect with the Source of your Being. On the other hand it is the way to utilise the power of thought to bring about change. And when both come together it is the most dynamic tool we have for evolution and self-mastery. It is a key to growth.

The Heartfulness prayer is practiced at bedtime, as follows:

Sit in a comfortable position. Gently close your eyes and relax. With a feeling of humility and love, silently and slowly repeat the prayer:

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.

Meditate for ten to fifteen minutes, allowing the meaning of the words to resonate in your heart and surface from within. Try to get lost in the feeling beyond the words. Allow yourself to melt into this prayerful feeling, as you go to sleep.



To experience Heartfulness,
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dive deep within



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Refining Our Intake

We are what we eat. We generally understand this cliché at a very physical level – that our body is made up of molecules from the food we eat. But our intake is not only physical. We also take in the world through our five senses, and through our more subtle intuitive senses and energetic responses, and how we assimilate those inputs also defines who we become.

A healthy body means taking in the right balance of nutrients. So too, our mind and heart process what we take in both consciously and unconsciously. So how can we refine all that we take in?

We could start by reviewing what we watch on TV and the Internet, the sounds we listen to, the conversations we have and all the perceptions that make up our sensory and energetic diets: how do they affect our holistic health? How can we moderate this intake to contribute to inner wellness?

In this issue we explore ways to expand our possibilities for well-being, including the role of compassion, an integrative medical approach to healing cancer, the yogic foundation of *yama* as a basis for business and for living itself, and how to tune in through the heart. In addition we continue our journey of consciousness with Daaji, exploring some of the outcomes of an expanded consciousness, and learn more about the basic laws of the universe.

The Editorial Team



Elizabeth Denley



Emma Ivaturi



Rishabh Kothari

CONTRIBUTORS

James Doty

James is the author of *Into The Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart* (Avery, 2016) and is co-founder of the Center for Compassion & Altruism Research & Education (CCARE) at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, USA.



Luke Coutinho

Author of *The Great Indian Diet*, with Shilpa Shetty, and *Eat Smart, Move More, Sleep Right – Your Personal Health Coach*, Luke is a holistic nutritionist, speaker and exercise physiologist, practicing in the field of lifestyle medicine and integrative healing. He specializes in cancer, disease and obesity, and is the founder of Pure Nutrition (purenutrition.me) and the co-founder of Goqii (www.goqii.com). Learn more about Luke at www.lukec Coutinho.com.



Samara Mahindra

Samara is a certified cancer exercise specialist and breast cancer recovery trainer. She has qualifications from the American Academy of Personal Training, NY, Institute for Integrative Nutrition, Cornell University and the T Colin Campbell Foundation. Her focus is integrative healing using complementary therapies. She is launching and establishing the CARER program globally, bringing complementary therapies of healing and recovering to the home of every cancer patient: <https://www.carerprogram.com/>.



Nipun Mehta

Nipun is the founder of ServiceSpace.org, a non-profit that works at the intersection of gift-economy, technology and volunteerism.



CONTRIBUTIONS

letters to the editors and guidelines
contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com

ADVERTISING

advertising@heartfulnessmagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

subscriptions@heartfulnessmagazine.com
<http://www.heartfulnessmagazine.com/subscriptions>

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Marg Spirituality Foundation.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Rishabh Kothari, Elizabeth Denley, Emma Ivaturi,
Veronique Nicolai (children)

DESIGN TEAM

Shivam Bajaj, Emma Ivaturi, Uma Maheswari,
Nehal Singh

PHOTOGRAPHY

Somkid Chajitvanit, Mona Mishra, N Parthasarathi
Kishore Rajendran, Dr Natwar Sharma,
Niket Vaidya

ART

Claire Bigand

WRITERS

Meghana Anand, James Doty, Victor Kannan,
Barbara J. Levin O'Riordan, Nipun Mehta,
Kamlesh D. Patel, Ros Pearmain, Elina Pinta

Issue 13, November 2016



BETWEEN STIMULUS and response

{ Q & A }

IN CONVERSATION WITH
DR JAMES R DOTY

Q: Your memoir *Into The Magic Shop* is a wonderful and enlightening read. You picked some great parts of your life to tie together, including learning meditation and visualization as a kid in Lancaster, California, at the Cactus Rabbit Magic Shop, having a near death experience, having a fall from being a multi-millionaire and eventually becoming a brain surgeon against all odds. The finale is your creation of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford eight years ago. I want to hear about being a surgeon but please start with the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE). Sometimes people think compassion is internal, vague and hard to describe, and that exploring compassion is a soft science. How are you studying compassion and altruism and what are you finding?”

JD: There’s been a lot of interest in how the brain responds or reacts to meditation and this research has been going on for the last three decades, initially led by Rick Hanson. But what is interesting to me, and remains interesting, is that what is at the core of many of these meditative practices is compassion: compassion for yourself certainly, and compassion for others.

There’s been a lot of interest in how the brain responds or reacts to meditation... But what is interesting to me, and remains interesting, is that what is at the core of many of these meditative practices is compassion: compassion for yourself certainly, and compassion for others.

As I looked at this area, I realized that our survival is related to nurturing and caring for our offspring. And in the human species this involves caring not only for our offspring but for others as well. As a result of this requirement – that our offspring are nurtured for a decade and a half or more after birth, unlike other mammals that just run off into the forest after birth – our offspring require us to essentially teach them, while they mirror our behaviors, so that they will survive. Yet the cost of that to our species – to the parents or the mother – is huge in regards to time, resources and energy. Without that nurturing, caring and bonding, our offspring don’t survive.

As a result, deeply ingrained or hardwired into our brains is a reward system based on us caring for others, primarily our offspring of our own species, but also caring for all beings. What happens is that the areas associated with reward increase their metabolism when we actually care for others. This is a deeply ingrained part of who we are, and what we are, as a species.

As we evolved from the nuclear family in a hostile environment to hunter-gatherer tribes in a hostile environment, in groups of ten to fifty, this requirement that we alleviate suffering or care for and nurture others was even more important. Because if an individual in our tribe or our group was suffering, it meant that potentially they could not do their job. If they did not do their job it could put the whole group at risk. So our ability to read emotional states, micro facial expressions, body language, and even interpret smells, was critically important as we evolved as a species.

Then when we domesticated animals and plants, this led to us having more time. But it’s interesting if you look at how society and religion have functioned; at the core is this absolute requirement for cooperation, caring and nurturing others. In fact it has been shown through a variety of studies that short-term ruthlessness cannot

benefit a species. For a species to survive long-term requires cooperation of the individuals in the group. Certainly this is central to the survival of the human species.

In regard to the creation of the Center at Stanford, I was at a point in my life where I started thinking about these things. As a result, from that research and interest, I realized that understanding how the brain responds to these situations, and how compassion affects our physiology, is really critically important.

As it turned out, there were a few people exploring this area. I then gathered an informal group of scientists at Stanford and we began some preliminary studies looking at some of these issues. Then it struck me that it would be wonderful to have the Dalai Lama come to Stanford to speak. What's interesting is that it struck me one day as I was walking through the campus. That was in 2007 and, prior to that, frankly I had no interest in the Dalai Lama. I was not particularly spiritual and in no way religious, but this image of him coming to Stanford and speaking really hit me; as a result I ended up having a meeting with His Holiness. I spoke with him about the work I had begun at Stanford and subsequently engaged in a conversation about the research we had begun. As you know, His Holiness is very interested in this topic and he also has had an interest in the neuroscience of meditation.

At the end of our conversation, the Dalai Lama began an animated dialogue in Tibetan with his primary translator, Thupten Jinpa, and, at the end of that conversation, not only did he agree to come to Stanford but he also was so impressed with the work that he wanted to make a personal donation. It was the largest donation he had ever given to a non-Tibetan cause at that time. That was incredibly overwhelming and moving, and it set the stage for others to make donations to this work and ultimately to formally create a Center at Stanford, which is part of the School of Medicine and an affiliate of the Neuroscience Institute at Stanford.

Q: It is beautiful how that came about and evolved over time, and I am grateful that you and the Dalai Lama are increasing a sense of compassion and studying it from different angles. I suppose some people might say that humans are born either with compassion or not, or that certain groups of people have it or they don't. I am guessing that you would say that compassion is something that can be cultivated quite systematically. Is that so?"

JD: I think that is exactly right, and your previous statement is also absolutely correct. Essentially, we are all born with a set of genes that define our attributes. But that being said, many of us don't utilize those attributes or maximally cultivate them. What I mean, as an example, is that there may be an individual who has significant genetic potential to be a long distance runner, but if he is never put into a situation to run long distances then that will never manifest. Frankly the same is true with compassion and, in fact, happiness. What we know is that all of us are born with a certain genetic potential for those types of behaviors but most of us don't maximize or potentiate them with intention, because we don't know how or we don't appreciate how beneficial they can be.

The other interesting aspect of gene expression is that we also know there are individuals, for example sociopaths, who are born with a disconnection in their brain that limits their ability to understand the emotional states of others. There are individuals who have gene receptors that limit their ability to respond to those transmitters associated with nurturing and caring, like oxytocin. This leads to individuals not responding the same way to a particular situation: a 'normal' person would respond empathically whereas this person would not do so, or not at the same level. Genetics do play a part but we also know that we can cultivate or maximize our potential for compassion by certain practices.



Q: Obviously compassion can be viewed and discussed from different angles. One angle is the context of social groups, and the political interaction of groups nationally and internationally. Clearly there is a lot of violence on the planet and a lot of gun violence. I was born in 1963 and I remember in history classes talking about World War II as the last great war, as if war was coming to an end. In my lifetime, the United States has been at war constantly, resulting in a lot of suffering. Also, internally in the country there have been many mass shootings and police killings.

Sometimes I consider compassion as something that flows inherently to where it is not yet. I think of the US as a place where that compassion has flowed from surprising places. I consider how the US bombed Japan with nuclear weapons and after that many compassionate Buddhist teachers and teachings came here from Japan. Later, Thich Nhat Hanh came here from Vietnam while the US was bombing Vietnam. Similarly, it was after China invaded Tibet that the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism spread to the West. My impression is that the Dalai Lama and thousands of Tibetan monks and nuns were quite happy being fairly disconnected from the rest of the world. But they were invaded and their compassion and wisdom exploded outward to where it was needed, including to the US. What do you think about that, and the need for compassion in this world that seems pretty violent now?

JD: Thank you for such an easy question to answer! I think what you say is partly true. Compassion is as important today as it has ever been. I would suggest that there are a couple issues that might give us insight into the situation. We were talking about the evolution of our species and the criticality of nurturing, caring and bonding – compassion – within that context. But there are a couple of other things that impact us that are also part of our evolutionary baggage. One of those is the

amygdala and our fear or flight or fight response. And remember that our DNA has not changed over the last 200,000 years when, on the savannahs of Africa, we in some ways lived an idyllic life in the context of not being burdened by cellphones, jobs or appointments. Our interest was focused on shelter, food, procreation and responding to potential threat.

That threat response, which is part of our autonomic nervous system, our sympathetic nervous system, allowed us to have a release of hormones that entered our blood system and resulted in our heart rate increasing, our blood being diverted from our gastro-intestinal tract to our skeletal muscles so we could run, and our heart being able to pump more blood, whenever we sensed a threat. Our pupils dilated so we could see more clearly and our sphincter tightened. It allowed us to respond to a threat by running and perhaps climbing a tree. If we survived, those affects quickly dissipated to our baseline and we went back to doing what we were doing.

The problem though is that the system has not changed and now we live in a modern environment with technology for which we never evolved. For many people there is constant engagement, perhaps at a low level, but still an engagement, of our sympathetic nervous system. This results in the chronic low-level release of these hormones. Such a situation has very deleterious affects on our physiology, impairing our health and decreasing our longevity. When you are in a constant state of arousal from fear or threat, this has an effect on the occurrence of disease, the duration and severity of disease and ultimately affects our lifespan.

Yet, what we do know is that we can mitigate these effects by certain practices, and switch from engagement with our sympathetic nervous system to this other part of our nervous system called the parasympathetic nervous system, which many call the 'rest and digest' system. The parasympathetic system is associated with a sense of calmness and relaxation. Your pupils are not dilated and your sphincter is not tight, your heart rate is at its normal rate, your cardiac function is at its best, your immune

system is functioning well and your stress hormones are at their baseline. When you are in this state you are much more open to interaction with others, areas of the brain associated with creativity are functioning at their best and those parts of you that allow you to be productive are also at their best. So we do have some control over being compassionate, but it is this baggage that affects so many people, and which causes many, many problems in society today.

To be continued ●

INTERVIEWED BY JOHN MALKIN, AUGUST 2016

DR DOTY IS THE AUTHOR OF *INTO THE MAGIC SHOP: A NEUROSURGEON'S QUEST TO DISCOVER THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRAIN AND THE SECRETS OF THE HEART* (AVERY, 2016) AND IS CO-FOUNDER OF THE CENTER FOR COMPASSION & ALTRUISM RESEARCH & EDUCATION (CCARE) AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY IN PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA, US.

JOHN MALKIN IS A JOURNALIST AND MUSICIAN LIVING IN SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA WHERE HE ALSO HOSTS RADIO PROGRAMS ON FREE RADIO SANTA CRUZ AND KZSC.



“It’s only when we focus on
healing the wounds of the heart
that there’s ever going to be peace in the world.

All the science and technology are not going to do that.”

—Dr James Doty

LEADERSHIP

is an

opportunity to serve.

It is not a

trumpet call to self-importance.

J. Donald Walters



YOGIC PRINCIPLES IN BUSINESS



{ Q & A }

**IN CONVERSATION WITH
SUSAN NICHOLS**

Q: You had quite an inspired journey starting your first company, yogitoes® inc. Tell us how it all came to be.

SN: The inspiration came from slipping on my yoga mat during my Ashtanga practice. At that time there was not a yoga towel in the market, so I had an ahah! moment to create one that would meet the needs of a yoga practitioner.

Q: How did you use yogic principles to develop your company?

SN: I had a ten-year practice and a certificate of teaching by the time I launched yogitoes®. This practice was the energetic foundation of the company. It was the core tool during the development: being 'present on your mat' is the same as being present and open to allow the unexpected to unfold and lead you to the next step. Be still, listen, and then take action.

Q: How can we move from a competitive to cooperative business model?

SN: When I launched yogitoes®, I choose the yogic principles of *Yama* – non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, remembering the higher reality, non-possessiveness – as the foundation of our business practice. It is the opposite of engaging in the word ‘competitive’. I encouraged my team to remove competition from our DNA, just as there is enough sun for everyone to share. Competition in the world of business often reflects scarcity or lack, verses existing in the paradigm of abundance.

As long as we listen to our customers’ needs, communicate honestly, and stay true to who we are, understanding our thoughts, words and actions, this will affect every living being, including Mother Earth.

Q: Can you share with us some of your personal tools for striking a work-life balance?

SN: My personal tools are

a daily practice of meditation,

Hatha Yoga,

going out in nature, even if it is walking my dog in the neighborhood, without any electronics, and

spending time with children and friends, with whom I can simply laugh and experience the human heart.

Universal ideas and solutions come through the times we are in joy and our lightness.



Q: What are some of the highlights of your upcoming book, *WE: An Intuitive Entrepreneur's Journey*?

SN: The book goes into detail of how yogitoes® came to be, from having a universal idea but little access to resources. It also shares the choices I made in navigating some substantial hurdles, by taking action when the Universe presented opportunity, taking action from intuition, not the mind, and the ten year journey ●

INTERVIEWED BY EMMA IVATURI

9TH World Confluence of Humanity, Power & Spirituality



Enlightenment: a journey within through service

Sach Bharat

Spirituality@Work



Shri Pranab Mukherjee
Hon'ble President of India



Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

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Chairman, Times Foundation

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT

Rahul Malhotra
Mobile: +91 9007010047
E-mail: confluence.2016@sachbharat.in

Sandeep Kochhar
Mobile: +91 90133 38103
E-mail: sandeep.kochhar@assocham.com

Rajeev Doval
Mobile: +91 9899992736
E-mail: rajeev.doval@timesgroup.com



MISERABLE & MAGICAL: FOR PARADOXICAL TIMES

NIPUN MEHTA addresses students on what they can do to bring change in their generation.

So, graduation day is here and this once-in-a-lifetime milestone moment has arrived. In the words of Taylor Swift, I can tell how you're feeling: "happy, free, confused, and lonely, miserable and magical at the same time." Who would've thought we'd be quoting words of wisdom from Taylor Swift at your commencement!

Today, I'm here with some good news and bad news. I'll give you the good first.

You might be surprised to hear this, but you are about to step out into a world that's in good shape -- in fact the best shape that that it's ever been in. The average person has never been better fed than today. Infant mortality has never been lower; on average we're leading longer, healthier lives. Child labor, illiteracy and unsafe water have ceased to be global norms. Democracy is in, as slavery is disappearing. People don't have to work as hard to just survive. A bicycle in 1895 used to cost 260 working hours, today we've gotten that number down to 7.2.

So, things are progressing. But I'm afraid that's not the full story. You'll want to brace yourselves, because this is the bad news part.

This week, Time Magazine's cover story labeled you guys as the 'Me, Me, Me' generation; the week before, the New York Times reported that the suicide rate for Gen X went up by 30% in the last decade, and 50% for the boomer generation. We've just learned that atmospheric carbon levels surpassed 400 parts per million for the first time in human history. Our honeybee colonies are collapsing, thereby threatening the future of our food supply. And all this is just the tip of the iceberg.

What we are handing over to you is a world full of inspiring realities coupled with incredibly daunting ones. In other words: miserable and magical isn't just a pop-song lyric, it's the paradox that you are inheriting from us.



What we are handing over to you is a world full of inspiring realities coupled with incredibly daunting ones. In other words: miserable and magical isn't just a pop-song lyric, it's the paradox that you are inheriting from us.

So, what do you do with that? I'm going to be honest -- I don't really know. I do know this, though, that at the core of all of today's most pressing challenges is one fundamental issue:

We have become profoundly disconnected.

Rather ironic, considering that we live in an era where Facebook has spawned 150 billion 'connections', as we collectively shell out 4.5 billion likes on status updates, every single day. Yet, a growing body of science is showing what we already feel, deep in our gut, that we're more isolated than ever before. The average American adult reports having just one real friend that they can count on. Just one. And for the first time in 30 years, mental health disabilities such as ADHD outrank physical ones among American children.

Somehow we've allowed our relationship to gadgets and things to overtake our real-world ties.

We've forgotten how to rescue each other.

Yet, deep inside we all still have that capacity. We know we have it because we saw it at Sandy Hook, in the brave teachers who gave up their lives to save their students. We saw it during the Boston Marathon when runners completed the race and kept running to the nearest blood bank. We saw it in Oklahoma when a waiter at a fast food chain decided to donate all his tips to the tornado relief efforts and triggered a chain of generosity.

So we know that we can tap into our inner goodness when crisis strikes. But can we do it on a run-of-the-mill Monday?

That's the question in front of you. Will you step up to rebuild a culture of trust, empathy and compassion? Our crisis of disconnection needs a renaissance of authentic friendship.

We need you to upgrade us from Me-Me-Me to We-We-We.

Reflecting on my own journey, there have been three keys that helped me return to a place of connection. I'd like to share those with you today, in the hope that perhaps it might support your journey.

THE FIRST KEY IS TO GIVE

In the movie *Wall Street*, which originally came out well before you guys were born, there's a character named Gordon Gekko whose credo in life reads: greed is good. When I was about your age, Silicon Valley was in the seductive grip of the dot-com boom. It was a time when it was easy to believe that greed was good. But a small group of us had a different hypothesis:

Maybe greed is good, but generosity is better.

We tested that hypothesis. When I started ServiceSpace, our first project was to build websites for non-profits at no charge. We ended up building and gifting away thousands of sites, but that wasn't our main goal. Our real purpose was to practice generosity.

In the early days, the media was pretty sure we had a hidden agenda.

"We're doing this just to practice giving with no strings attached," we said.

The few who actually believed us didn't think we could sustain it. The thing is, we did. A decade later, when our work started attracting millions of viewers, entrepreneurs told us that we were crazy to not slap on ads or try to monetize our services. The thing is, we didn't. We probably were a bit crazy. And when we started Karma Kitchen, people really thought, "No way!" It was a restaurant where your check always read zero, with this note: "Your meal is paid for by someone before you, and now it's your chance to pay it forward." The thing is, 25,000 meals later, the chain continues in several cities around the globe.

People consistently underestimate generosity, but human beings are simply wired to give.

In one study at Harvard, scientists surprised a couple of hundred volunteers with an unexpected monetary reward and gave them the choice of keeping it or giving it away. The only catch was that they had to make the decision spontaneously. Lo and behold, the majority chose to give away the money! Greed, it turns out, is a calculated after thought. Our natural instinct is, and always has been, to give.

When you take economics in college, you will learn that all of economics is rooted in the assumption that people aim to maximize self-interest. I hope you don't just take that for granted. I hope you challenge it. Consider the likes of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr and



That's the question in front of you. Will you step up to rebuild a culture of trust, empathy and compassion? Our crisis of disconnection needs a renaissance of authentic friendship.

Mother Teresa who have rocked the history of our planet with the exact opposite assumption, with the belief in the goodness of our human nature.

Or consider Ruby Bridges.

Six-year-old Ruby was the first African American girl to go to an all-white school on November 14, 1960. All the teachers refused to teach her, except for Mrs Henry. Ruby received constant death threats and, on the way to class every day, people would line up to shout and throw things. Mrs Henry instructed Ruby not to speak to anyone, as she crossed the jeering crowds every day.

One day, she saw Ruby saying something, so she said, "Ruby, I told you not to speak to anyone."
"No, Mrs Henry, I didn't say anything to them."
"Ruby, I saw you talking. I saw your lips moving."
"Oh, I was just praying. I was praying for them," Ruby responded. Then she recited her prayer: "Please God, try to forgive these people. Because even if they say those

bad things, they don't know what they're doing."

A six year old! Wishing well for those who were wishing her harm. How generous is that? And what does it say about the power of the human heart?

Our capacity to love is a currency that never runs out.

May each of you tap into that generous ocean and discover every day, what it means to give.

THE SECOND KEY IS TO RECEIVE

When we give, we think we are helping others. That's true, but we are also helping ourselves. With any act of unconditional service, no matter how small, our biochemistry changes, our mind quietens, and we feel a sense of gratefulness. This inner transformation fundamentally shifts the direction of our lives.

Very quickly, kindness shifts from being an activity to a way of life.

When we give, we receive many times over. Or, as the Dalai Lama once put it, "Be selfish, be generous." It is in giving that we receive.

When we think of generosity, we typically think of it as a zero sum game. If I give you a dollar, that's one less dollar for me. The inner world, though, operates with an entirely different set of rules. The boundaries aren't so easy to decipher. Your state of being inherently affects my state of being. This isn't feel-good talk. It's actual science. Research shows that, in close proximity, when people feel connected, their individual heartbeats actually start to synchronize, even with zero physical contact. In neuroscience, the discovery of mirror neurons has shown us that we literally do feel each other's pain and joy.

And joy is definitely not a zero sum game. The law of abundance says that if I give you a smile, that's not one less smile for me.

The more I smile, the more I do smile. The more I love, the more love I have to give. So, when you give externally, you receive internally. How do the two compare? That's a question only you can answer for yourself, and that answer will keep changing as your awareness deepens.

Yet this much is clear: if you only focus on the externals, you'll live your life in the deadening pursuit of power and products. But if you stay in touch with your inner truth, you will come alive with joy, purpose, and gratitude. You will tap into the law of abundance.

May you discover that to be truly selfish, you must be generous. In giving, may you fully experience what it means to receive.

If you only focus on the externals, you'll live your life in the deadening pursuit of power and products. But if you stay in touch with your inner truth, you will come alive with joy, purpose, and gratitude. You will tap into the law of abundance.



THE THIRD KEY IS TO DANCE

Our biggest problem with giving and receiving is that we try and track it. And when we do that, we lose the beat.

The best dancers are never singularly focused on the mechanics of their movements. They know how to let go, tune into the rhythm and synchronize with their partners. It's like that with giving too. It's a futile exercise to track who is getting what. We just have to dance. Take one of my friends for example, a very successful entrepreneur.

Along his journey, he realized that it's not enough, as the cliché goes, to find your gifts. Gifts are actually meant to be given.

In his daily life, he started cultivating some beautiful practices of generosity. For instance, every time he walked into a fancy restaurant, he told the waiter to find the couple most madly in love. "Put their tab on my bill, and tell them a stranger paid for their meal, with the hope that they pay it forward somewhere, somehow," he would say. Being a fan of Batman, he took his anonymity seriously: "If anyone finds out it was me, the deal is off." Many restaurants and waiters knew him for this. As a food connoisseur, some of his favorite places were also quite pricey.

On one such day, he walked into a nice restaurant and did his usual drill. The person serving him obliged, however, this time, the waiter came back with a counter request: "Sir, I know you like to be anonymous, but when I told that couple about the tab being covered, the woman started sobbing. In fact, it's been ten minutes and she's still tearing up. I think it would make her feel better if you were to just introduce yourself, just this once."

Seeing this, he agreed to break his own cardinal rule and walked over to introduce himself.

"M'aam, I was only trying to make your day. If it has brought up something, I'm so sorry."

The woman excitedly said, “Oh no, not at all. You’ve just made my year, maybe my life. My husband and I, well, we work at a small non-profit with physically challenged kids, and we have been saving up all year to have this meal here. It is our one year marriage anniversary today.” After a pause, she continued, “We always serve others in small ways, but to receive a kind act like this on our special day, well, it’s just an overwhelming testimonial that what goes around comes around. It renews our faith in humanity. Thank you. Thank you so much.”

All of them were in tears. They kept in touch, he joined their board and they are friends to this day.

Now, in that scenario, who was the giver? Who was the receiver? And more importantly, does it even matter? Dancing tells us to stop keeping track.

Sometimes you’re giving and sometimes you’re receiving, but it doesn’t really matter because the real reward of that give and take doesn’t lie in the value of what’s being exchanged. The real reward lies in what flows between us – our connection.

CONCLUSION

So, my dear friends, there you have it. The bad news is that we’re in the middle of a crisis of disconnection, and the good news is that each and every one of you has the capacity to repair the web – to give, to receive and to dance.

Sometime last year, I treated a homeless woman to something she really wanted, ice cream. We walked into a nearby 7-11, she got her ice cream and I paid for it.

Along the way, though, we had a great 3-minute chat about generosity and, as we were leaving the store, she said something remarkable: “I’d like to buy you something. Can I buy you something?”

She emptied her pockets and held up a nickel. The cashier looked on, as we all share a beautiful, awkward, empathy-filled moment of silence.

Then, I heard my voice responding, “That’s so kind of you. I would be delighted to receive your offering. What if we pay-it-forward by tipping this kind cashier who has just helped us?”

Her face broke into a huge smile. “Good idea,” she said, while dropping the nickel into the tip jar.

No matter what we have, or don’t have, we can all give. The good news is that generosity is not a luxury sport.

Dr Martin Luther King Jr said it best, when he said, “Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve.” You only need a heart full of grace, generated by love.

May you all find greatness in service to life. May you all give, receive, and never, ever stop dancing ●

EXCERPTS FROM A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE HARKER SCHOOL, MAY 2013.

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REDEFINING THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Each of us has a role to play in the evolution of humanity. In fact, we already do, with our intentions, thoughts, actions and consciousness. As active contributors to the collective consciousness, it is our duty to shift our awareness to self-development. It is by improving ourselves that we bring positive change to the collective. It starts from within.

About the Speaker

Mutsa Samuel is the leading independent motivational speaker in Zimbabwe. Mutsa Samuel began his public speaking career at the age of 20. After graduating from the University of Kansas with a Bachelor of General Studies in Pre-Medicine Human Biology and minors in Sociology and Psychology, Mutsa Samuel completed a postgraduate degree in Enterprise Management and Entrepreneurial Strategy at the University of Cape Town.



The heart is everywhere,
and each part of the organism
is only the specialized force
of the heart itself.

—Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

The art of connection:
How our heart
is in every moment of meeting



Have you noticed how happiness affects your ability to communicate? ROSALIND PEARMAIN shares some ideas on how we connect with others through the different dimensions of the heart.

Every day we are involved in countless meetings with others – as we pass acquaintances or neighbors in the street, as we are with family or friends, as we work or play. If you pay attention, you can discover that your heart is always involved somehow in these encounters.

There are three different dimensions of the heart that help us connect with each other. They are like aspects of most musical instruments:

TUNING IN

The first is how we join in a song or a dance or music making – or even play with a baby. We have to catch the same note, the same intensity or shape of movement, the same phrasing. We tune in and join with the person. Sometimes we can feel this is absolutely perfect and in tune, and immediately both of us feel glad to be meeting. At difficult times, it is the opposite: we make an upbeat approach when they are flat or distracted or sad. Then meeting can feel off-key and jarring. But if we wait, listen and feel a bit more, and keep trying to attune with our heart radar, then we are able to find a way of joining and connecting as we go along. It is just like tuning into a radio station.

CREATING SPACE – AMPLIFYING

The second goes a bit further than tuning. Our hearts need to be open, to receive the other person's being, their feelings and experience. We drop our focus on our own preoccupations. We let go of our own needs being heard, and make as big a space as possible to accompany the person in front of us. Here we are using the infinite space of the heart to care for others, to hold them, to love them. We can expand this beautiful quality of receiving and of compassion to really give attention and love to the person. It is as if we literally give them space to be, to exist. So they feel safer and more at home.

RESONATING AND CONNECTING

The third is like a kind of sounding board in a musical instrument. When we receive the other person's news or feelings or concerns, we find a kind of resonance within us, we join them in sharing the experience, like humming. Our heart is moved and stirred. Then the other person feels felt by us and their hearts are touched too and it is as if it goes back and forth.

Have you noticed that when you feel really well and happy, and your heart is open, all these steps of this arc of meeting flow into a beautiful movement towards others without effort? And, in contrast, when you are affected by negative thoughts or moods, do you feel a bit constricted and stuck?

One more thought. If you put these three elements together, of opening, expanding and resonating, they are like the sacred sound of A-U-M ●

BASED ON THE BOOK, *THE HEART OF LISTENING: ATTENTIONAL QUALITIES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELING*, PUBLISHED BY SAGE CONTINUUM.



Flow & Equilibrium

How do flow and equilibrium create either dynamism or stagnation in nature and within our inner state? VICTOR KANNAN explores these ideas, to explain how we can remain dynamic and at the same time maintain harmony and balance.

Without a difference in atmospheric pressure there is no breeze. Without a difference in height there is no vista. Without a difference in level there is no water flow. The greater the difference, the greater the force in the flow and in the resulting noise, destruction and also awe-inspiring magnificence.

But, the law of equilibrium states that all things seek and tend towards equilibrium or a steady state. So, what is it that is consistent in these two phenomena of flow and equilibrium?

While it is clear that flow indicates a natural tendency towards equilibrium, how does the principle of equilibrium not lead to stagnation? When we think of the opposite of stagnation, the idea of dynamism comes to mind.

For example, let us think of comfort. A person in the jungle feels cooler in the shade. A city dweller in the shade feels cooler in an air-conditioned space. The level of comfort experienced by each of them is a state of equilibrium. In absolute terms, however, they are different.

So, the process through which an object, individual or knowledge flows between two states of equilibrium may be explained as dynamism. Ironically, the state of equilibrium may also induce us to be comfortable and thereby lead to stagnation. In other words, anyone maintaining status quo may be considered to be in a state

of stagnation. Hence we have the common urge to get out of our comfort zone to grow and expand.

Let us explore how we can choose dynamism over stagnation.

For this discussion, nature all around us will be called external nature. Thoughts and actions, moods and feelings, attitudes and behaviors, intuitions and inspirations, health and sickness, etc. will be called internal nature.

There is a constant flow from the internal to the external, and vice versa. This is called interaction. This interaction can be classified as reaction or response; observation or wonderment; activity or involvement. When there is ease and resonance in the interaction, for example, working well with people and circumstances, we say there is a good flow. This flow creates harmony and a state of equilibrium.

The equilibrium established between the internal nature and the external nature may be called 'peace'. This peaceful state gives room for positive creativity, and this positive creativity begins a flow towards the next level of equilibrium and peace, and so on. This gives the idea that peace itself evolves in its quality and level, through flow and successive levels of equilibrium.

In contrast, if we enjoy this state of equilibrium, we settle into stagnation.

To engender dynamism, aspiration is necessary. Aspiration is the bridge that connects the different states and creates a flow similar to the breeze that evens out atmospheric pressure, and the force of gravity that evens out the level of water.

So, acceptance of differences, and aspiration for noble heights, maintains the flow through successive states of equilibrium. This is dynamism.

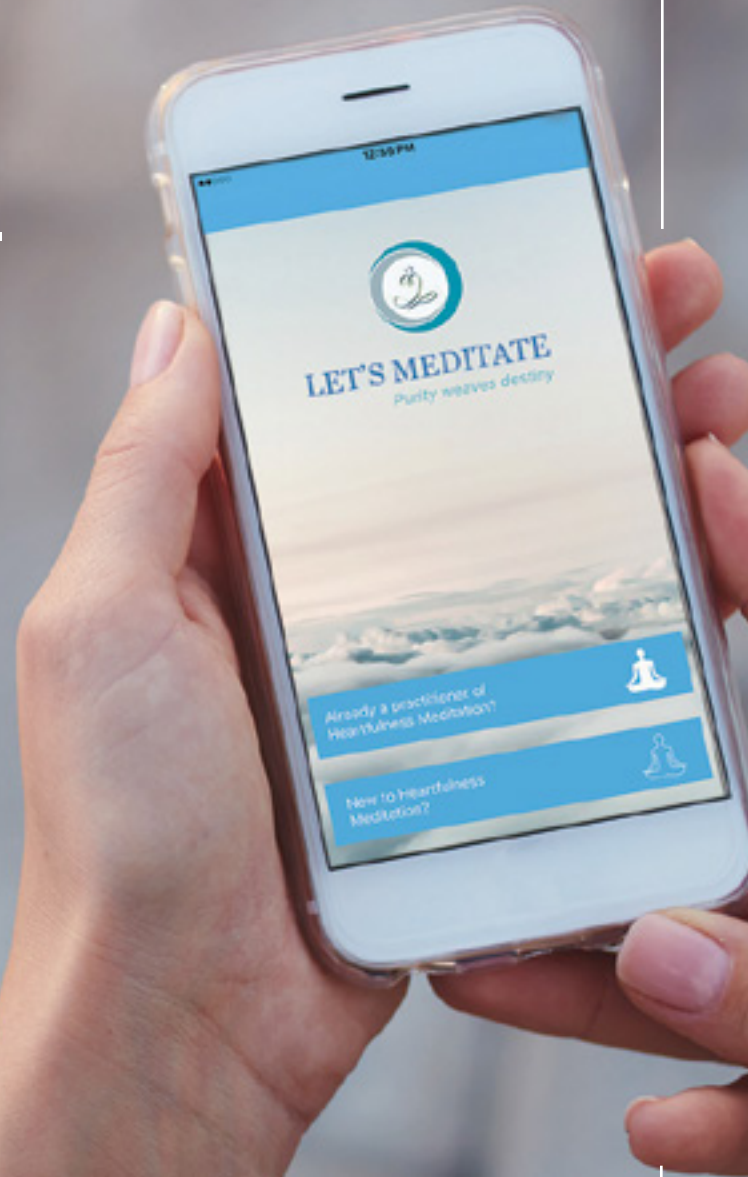
This is the crux of individual growth, inner evolution: involution.

To get on with it is an adventure, an inner adventure: invention ●

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THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

The Evolution of Consciousness Series

SPACE, TIME & THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

Last month, in Part 7, KAMLESH D. PATEL explored the question, “Why should we want to expand our consciousness towards a higher destiny?” both from the individual perspective as well as for humanity as a whole. In this issue, he shares with us some of the outcomes of an expanded consciousness.

The purpose of life is to facilitate expansion of available consciousness to its fullest potential. This expansion eventually takes us to a state of lightness and joy, where the subtle body is pure, simple and refined, where there is no longer any separation between the heart and the mind – they are one, with the heart as the field of action for the mind and vice versa. This integrated, holistic state of being is known as Yoga. All the practices of Yoga are designed to bring about this state of oneness, or unity with the Source of all existence.

In mystical or religious terms, this Source of all existence is given the name God or divinity. In science, it is called the absolute, ultimate reality or original state of existence. It is the Base on which everything exists, the substratum of the existence of the universe. Yoga unites the two fields of human thought, as Yoga deals with pure knowledge. Yogis of high calibre are able to do this based on their direct experience, and have described God in a scientific way. This direct perception is possible because of the expansion of consciousness that comes from yogic practice.

For example, in physics, scientists speak of the space-time continuum, and yogis describe the same thing – the interplay of *akasha* and *avakasha*, the Sanskrit words meaning space and time.

Here is a brief description by the great yogi of the 20th century¹, Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur:

Before creation there was only 'space' all over. Thus the being of God (Isha) was a later development, and it took some time for its appearance. We see space as endless and eternal, so we conclude God as well to be eternal. Time followed after God had come into being. Thus space served as the mother of creation of God, and time was the negative state of it. Everything must have its end in Endlessness. Motion was also there in everything, however fine or invisible it might be. One might also ask, who created space, then? The only possible answer can be that the need for creation of God and of the universe led to be the cause of the existence of space. It is and shall ever be, and is therefore eternal. ...

If one develops within him the state of akasha, he has then reached the highest point ... Akasha, or space, is the Absolute. It is not composed of particles, nor is there any action in it. It is perfectly pure and unalloyed. ...

Akasha is space, while avakasha is time – both widely different from each other. Time – the creation of space – may be taken as the grosser state of akasha. As a matter of fact the universe is the manifestation of time or avakasha, while God is that of akasha or space. ...

At the time when there was only the Absolute, and no creation, the question of time did not arise at all. When the thought of creation got enlivened in the Base, it was

perfectly free from everything. It proceeded on and, due to the effect of motion, got transformed into power, with its tendency directed towards action. But for the action it must naturally stand in need of a field or base. Now the brief pause intervening the original thought and subsequent being, or in other words between cause and effect, was already there. This can appropriately be interpreted as 'duration' or 'time', and it served for the field of its action. Thus time, having merged into the power, got itself transformed into power, for further actions towards creation.

As a general rule a thought when it becomes deep brings into effect something like a pause, which has a tremendous force. In the case of the Centre, the question of depth does not arise at all, because of perfect uniformity there. The idea of velocity of force, the direct action of the mind, was also absent there, since the Centre or the Ultimate Brahman, though Absolute, did not possess mind.

Thus whatever existed between thought and action was power, which is termed as 'time'. The same power we too got into our share but in accordance with our limited capacity. Now, in order to utilise this power we have to merge it in the greater power of the Centre, which is all and absolute. ... To my view, the science of physics cannot be taken as complete without a full knowledge of this great power which is in fact the root of all powers.

...perception is purified.
It is like looking through
a still, clear pond to
the substratum below
instead of trying to see
through murky turbulent
water. There is clarity and
discernment as a result of
purifying the subtle body of
all its complexities.

This description was written in the 1940s, based on Ram Chandra's direct experience of the relationship between space and time and the creation of the universe. His ability to perceive such knowledge directly was because of his highly evolved consciousness. He could just as easily penetrate matter and describe in detail the internal structure of an atom without any study of physics. Likewise, the great mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan was able to perceive pure mathematical functions in nature through direct perception, which were later proved by western empirical methods.

This capacity for direct perception can be developed by the three main yogic practices which were covered in Parts 2, 3 and 4 of this series.

The first is the removal of all of the complexities or impressions that we have accumulated by Yogic Cleaning, which is supported by Yogic Transmission. As a result, perception is purified. It is like looking through a still, clear pond to the substratum below instead of trying to see through murky turbulent water. There is clarity and discernment as a result of purifying the subtle body of all its complexities.

The second process is the refinement of the functions of the subtle body – intellect, thinking and ego – so that consciousness can expand and evolve. Intellect matures to wisdom, thinking deepens to feeling and beyond, and ego lets go of its focus on 'I' to exist for the good of all. These changes happen through meditation with Yogic Transmission.

¹ Ram Chandra, *Complete Works of Ram Chandra*, Vol. 1, 2015, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, India

Mathematically:

Expansion of consciousness is directly proportional to the refinement of ego, intellect and mind. The heavier the burden of ego, the lesser the chance for consciousness to expand.

The third process is the connection of consciousness with the Source through the heart. This is a sign of expanding wisdom and is activated like a switch through the practice of prayer.

Over time, by doing these three simple daily practices of meditation in the morning, cleaning in the evening, and prayer at bedtime, our inner capacities are awakened, including intuition from the subconscious and inspiration from the superconscious. We realize our true potential.

Mainstream science today recognizes how little of our human potential we utilise, but has not been able to give us the tools for increasing that capacity. It is the scientists of the inner universe, the great saints, yogis and mystics of the world, who have shown us how to do this. Isn't it interesting that these great beings have often described as unscientific!

Actually the same has also been true in the world of the science of matter. Galileo Galilei is today considered to be the father of observational astronomy, the father of modern physics, the father of the scientific method, and even the father of science. Yet when he was alive he was put under house arrest for the last thirty years of his life for stating that the earth was not the centre of the universe. It is hard to believe today, but in the early 17th century he was proclaimed a heretic for his astronomical discoveries! Those who have been at the forefront of knowledge have often challenged the status quo. Thankfully, science is now starting to validate what yogis of calibre have long known as a result of expanded consciousness.

When we ponder over the great scientific discoveries and yogic findings, the source of such research is always found in the overall relaxed state of the individuals. Let us recall the great discoveries of the Archimedes Principle, the fundamental principle of gravitation by Sir Isaac Newton, radioactivity by Madame Curie, the discovery of the structure of the benzene molecule and the double helix structure of DNA. Spiritual findings and scientific findings share the same source. They are not at all opposed or different in their approach.

When we really go into them, so many spiritual practices will reveal their true scientific basis. It is only when we do not understand their significance that we become sceptics, which is unfortunate. It would be wonderful to peep into the scientific basis behind so many religious rituals which have found their place in the daily routines of many cultures.

In earlier times, such expanded consciousness was only the domain of those yogis and mystics who renounced everyday life, but today it is available to all through the practice of Heartfulness. And it brings qualitative changes to our lives.

When we ponder over the great scientific discoveries and yogic findings, the source of such research is always found in the overall relaxed state of the individuals.

Our available consciousness expands from:

attachment to non-attachment,
selfishness to selflessness,
analytical reactivity to heartfelt responsiveness,
limited by a restrictive ego to egolessness, once
the awareness of self dissolves,
moment to moment to timelessness,
contraction to expansion,
restlessness to peace,
imbalance to balance,
darkness to light,
heaviness to lightness,
grossness to subtleness,
complexity to simplicity,
impurity to purity,
the pull of desires to desirelessness,
thinking to feeling, feeling to experience,
experience to being, being to non-being,
'I, me and mine' to 'we, us and ours',
intellectualizing to wisdom,
everything that we have to everything that there
is: LOVE,
mundane consciousness to divine consciousness,
freeing us even from freedom ●

About Kamlesh Patel

Embracing the many roles of a modern-day spiritual Guide, you will find Kamlesh Patel equally at home meditating with a group of followers in the sublime stillness of a Himalayan ashram, teaching thousands of people to meditate at an international conference in Lyon France or Los Angeles California, addressing recruits in a police academy in Delhi and sharing tips on life skills with students at a high school campus in Mumbai.

Known to many as Daaji, he has that rare and beautiful blend of eastern heart and western mind that allows him to dive deep into the centre of his existence in the heart, and simultaneously have a scientific approach to original research in the field of meditation, spirituality and human evolution.

As President of the Heartfulness Institute and the fourth spiritual Guide in the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga, Daaji oversees Heartfulness centers and ashrams in over 110 countries, and guides the 7,000 certified trainers who are permitted to impart Yogic Transmission under his care.



*He who can no longer pause to wonder
and stand rapt in awe, is as good as
dead; his eyes are closed.*

–Albert Einstein



HEALS, CURES, REJUVENATES
Treading the Path of Ayurveda

An Integrative Foundation to Healing

{ Q & A }

IN CONVERSATION WITH LUKE COUTINHO & SAMARA MAHINDRA

LUKE COUTINHO and SAMARA MAHINDRA share their experiences of working with cancer patients using an integrative, holistic approach, involving the best of both worlds. They incorporate medical treatment and lifestyle changes to bring about the optimum possibility for well-being.

Q: Luke and Samara, welcome. Luke, your field is Integrative and Lifestyle Medicine, and Samara you are a Holistic Life Coach. Let's start by understanding what you both do. Samara?

SM: I got into this field about six years ago, because I lost my mother to cancer. Integrative medicine is nothing but looking at a holistic lifestyle for the betterment of your health. We look at nutrition, movement, mind-body therapy, sleep patterns, career, relationships etc. It is the entirety of a lifestyle instead of just looking at one aspect of health and well-being.



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JOINT PAIN, DISC PROLAPSE, ARTHRITIS, FROZEN SHOULDER, GOUT, GENERAL WEAKNESS AND MUSCLE WASTING, PARALYSIS FROM SHOCK, SPONDYLITIS, POST FRACTURE MANAGERMENTS. ALL TYPES OF HEADACHES, CHRONIC MIGRAINE, SINUSITIS, INSOMNIA, ENT PROBLEMS, STRESS, DEPRESSION, MEMORY LOSS AND ANXIETY, BIPOLAR DISORDERS AND HYPERTENSION. WEIGHT LOSS, PCOD, HORMONAL IMBALANCES, WEIGHT GAIN, INDIGESTION, ACIDITY- GAS DISORDERS, CROHN'S DISEASE, ULCERATIVE COLITIS, KIDNEY STONES, FATTY LIVER, LIVER CIRRHOSIS, CONSTIPATION. ALL TYPES OF SKIN, NAIL, HAIR PROBLEMS, ASTHMA AND ALLERGIC PROBLEMS, INFERTILITY, CARE IN PREGNANCY & AFTER DELIVERY, SPECIAL BEAUTY THERAPIES

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Q: What about you Luke?

LC: I figured out a long time ago that I didn't just want to work with symptoms in my patients. I believe that it is possible to get to the root cause using the intelligence of the human body. In Integrative and Lifestyle Medicine we need good doctors, and we need good medicines to be prescribed the right way, for the right reasons.

So we have the patient or client in the center. Then we have a doctor who is required for whatever disease the patient has, and a nutritionist who looks at the food the person eats, and you may have an emotional healer or therapist if the person has emotional issues, because we believe in the mind-body concept. There cannot be healing in the human body unless there is progressive healing in the mind.

Sometimes you may need a physiotherapist if movement is a problem. A lot of people say, "Don't move when you are sick," but activity and movement create blood circulation. Sometimes you may have an exercise physiologist to help with circulation when you are bedridden.

So a holistic approach has the best interests of the patient in the center. You have everything that you need that contributes to the vision of the healing of the patient at the root cause level. You don't want the patient to come back with the same issue in the future, or other issues resulting from the previous disease. We want to give them the assistance to heal and sustain their health for the rest of their lives.

Q: So are you saying that it is not enough to treat the symptoms of that disease, but lifestyle changes are also needed to allow changes to happen for the person?

LC: Absolutely.

Q: What sort of people do you work with?

LC: Initially, when I started using this approach in Bombay, it was predominantly for weight loss. People saw being overweight as a disease, but when I further diagnosed their problems the causes would be things like a slow liver, or cirrhosis of the liver, or issues with

You have everything that you need that contributes to the vision of the healing of the patient at the root cause level. You don't want the patient to come back with the same issue in the future, or other issues resulting from the previous disease. We want to give them the assistance to heal and sustain their health for the rest of their lives.

the heart, or an acidic body, because you can't lose weight when the body is acidic.

And from there I moved on to cancer patients in a very surprising way. I had four patients come to me with less than a week to live. Their doctor had said, "There is nothing you can do. Just meet a nutritionist and eat some good food, and enjoy your last few days." So I went through their blood reports and one thing stood out: they had extremely low immunity. These patients had been treated for 3 years, having surgery, chemotherapy and radiation, but nothing had been done for their immunity.

I spent a week boosting their immune systems, as their bodies were malnourished, and two of those patients lived on for four and a half years while the other two are still living today. I am talking about pancreatic cancer, liver cancer, and there was no magic in what I did. I just figured I needed to boost their immune systems.

Since then, my practice has changed, so that now 98% of the work I do is with cancer patients. Initially, doctors would send people to me who were in the fourth stage of cancer, but today I have patients who are in the first stage and there is the full range in between. We work with doctors to figure out the best holistic model for each person. And now I have patients in Czechoslovakia, Russia, America, etc. We started programs and they are doing well, so it is working. And what is working is that we are connecting mind and body through a holistic approach.

Q: Do you also treat cancer patients Samara?

SM: Yes, very much so. As I said, I got into this field for personal reasons, and I work primarily with cancer patients. The space that I specialize in is post-treatment, so my patients have been through conventional treatment and work with me basically to integrate lifestyle changes.

Q: What sort of lifestyle changes do you bring about?

SM: So like Luke, it is very holistic. Predominantly I work with integrating nutrition, movement and mind-body therapies, to change lifestyle. The idea is to reduce the risk of relapse. What happens is that a lot of people go through treatment and they think, “That’s it!” and go back to an unhealthy lifestyle. They live how they were living before, and that will increase the risk of relapse. We are trying to change that.

Q: Both of you mentioned mind-body medicine, which is a huge field in medicine today. Companies have realized that billions of dollars are being lost in productivity and absenteeism as a result of stress. So what are the techniques you use to help people with their minds, and to develop calm and peace, to have more positive thoughts, especially in the healing process?

LC: I write out about 30 to 40 prescriptions in a day, and it is meditation and *pranayama* at the start of every prescription. Even when someone claims that they are not stressed, someone who does not accept that an emotion from childhood or a relationship could cause stress, or financial problems, or losing a job, I still encourage them to do meditation and *pranayama*, because I have seen that they work.

We all study the placebo effect in medicine. We all know how it works – the mind comes first. If a doctor in a white coat gives you a sugar pill and says your headache is going to go, it is going to go, even though it is a sugar pill. We need to teach people how to create that balance and peace in their own minds that then affects the human body.

I was exposed to meditation about three years ago during my first trip to Hyderabad, when a teacher came up to me and said, “You are absorbing all of the emotions of your patients.” I realized the amount of negative emotion I was absorbing, so I got into meditation and learnt how to focus on my breath, and I felt better, I could focus on what I had to do and on my personal life as well.

Meditation is now the most important part of my treatment... You have your physical self, your mental and intellectual self, your emotional self and your spiritual self, and today most people are not growing in all of those selves. So in Integrative Medicine, we try to combine them so we grow in all these selves.



When I saw what it could do for me, I thought about what it could do for someone who really has a serious problem. So I started offering meditation to my patients as well. I tied up with a lot of yoga therapists who worked with me on cases, and it was fantastic. I could work on nutrition and they would handle the mind, and the healing was beautiful. Even if the person was only going to live for another two months, we would make sure they would live a quality life, and not in and out of hospitals.

And then I came across Heartfulness meditation: I met one of the trainers at an event, and just the way she told me how it worked, and arranged for someone to come over to my place and give me the three introductory sessions, it was all so simple. With Heartfulness meditation, I could literally take the concept with me everywhere.

I was with a patient at the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. She was getting the best treatment available, but she was so disillusioned, so a trainer in New York did a couple of Heartfulness meditation sessions with her, and she felt so good. Her whole outlook changed. She was able to go out walking in the streets instead of just focusing on the disease. Someone else in New Jersey had a knee replacement and was completely demoralized,

and a Heartfulness trainer was able to help. These people get back to me and say, “It works, it’s awesome.”

Meditation is now the most important part of my treatment. At the same time, I also know that if you have a weak physical body, you can’t meditate. So it is the mind-body connect, or you can call it the body-mind connect; both ways it is equal. You have your physical self, your mental and intellectual self, your emotional self and your spiritual self, and today most people are not growing in all of those selves. So in Integrative Medicine, we try to combine them so we grow in all these selves.

Today people are growing intellectually, so they try to diagnose their own cancer using Google. But that also brings a lot of worry and fear. Technology has moved so fast that humans are not able to keep up with it, and that gap creates negative emotions and fear. We need technology, but the gap is too much right now.

So when you put all these integrative approaches together, that is what I believe is the foundation of healing. Sometimes we succeed, and sometimes I question myself: “Why am I trying to fight the laws of Nature to



keep someone alive?" So sometimes we just have to let it be. We do what we can and let it be.

Every time I sit with a patient, I can figure out what has caused the disease. It is easy to blame the environment, but we are all breathing the same air. It is also easy to blame food, but most of us eat the same food. It finally comes down to other root causes, such as an antibiotic course that was very badly handled. These are all diseases of immunity. So we really come down to simple things that don't have to be what Google says.

In a study done with our own cancer patients, 86% of women's breast cancers were initiated as a result of emotional distress. How did we find that out? We don't give our patients two minutes of time. A consultation

with a patient can be anywhere between half an hour and two hours. We ask every question we need to. And when we discover the start of the cancer, we always find that it happened at the most traumatic time in that person's life with internalized emotions.

The truth is that there is a connection between mind and body. Meditation works for me, but for those people who do not want to meditate they can always do deep breathing, as deep breathing centers you and balances your cortisol levels, your oxygen levels, as that is how the human body is designed. Your breath aligns you. People have different ways of coping, but ultimately meditation brings you back to your true self, so it is an integral part of my healing.

To be continued ●

INTERVIEWED BY ELIZABETH DENLEY

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Buddhism in Myanmar

A Photo Essay by Niket Vaidya





The main religion among the 50 million inhabitants of Myanmar is Theravada Buddhism, and in traditional society the monastery is the center of village life. People are expected to follow the five basic virtues of Buddhism, as well as give charity and practice meditation. They also retain the worship of nature spirits, known as *nats*, a tradition that predates the arrival of Buddhism.

Buddhist monuments were built mostly from the 11th to 13th centuries AD, when Bagan was the seat of the Myanmar dynasty. Bagan is a plain in the middle of Myanmar, along the east bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River. The landscape is dotted with pagodas, and in the early morning light it is stunning to behold.

The life of a Buddhist monk is simple and free from superfluous wants.





The day begins early with prayers and offerings from the villagers.

Looking at this simplicity there is a longing to turn to our own divinity ●



The state of prayer is that of a devotee, and it is strengthened by love. This constitutes the first step in the ladder which helps us to climb up to the Ultimate.

-Ram Chandra

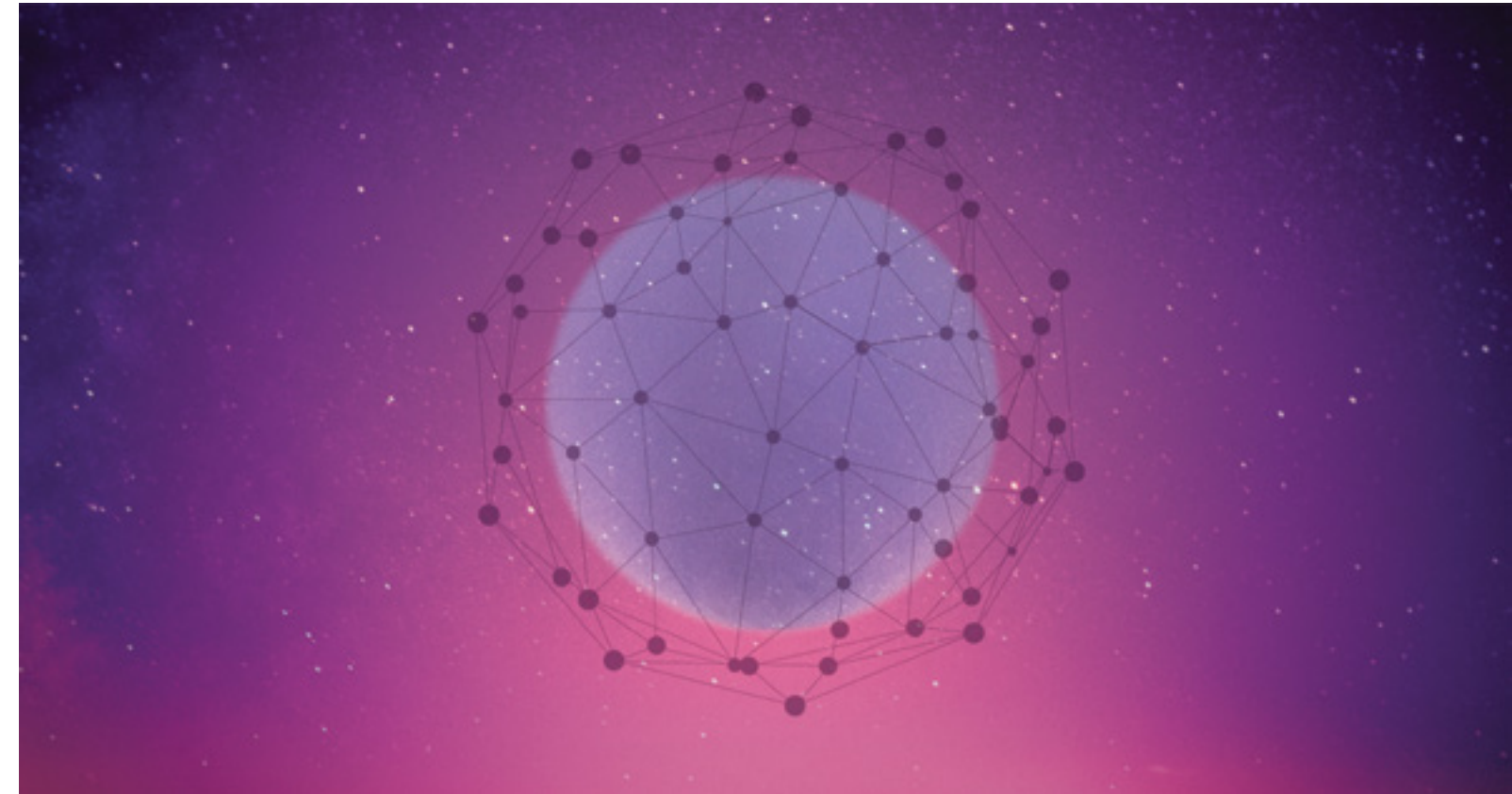
The Magic of Unseen Laws

ELINA PINTA experiments in her personal life with the laws of the universe.



If we could surrender
to Earth's intelligence,
we would rise up
rooted, like trees.

—Rainer Maria Rilke



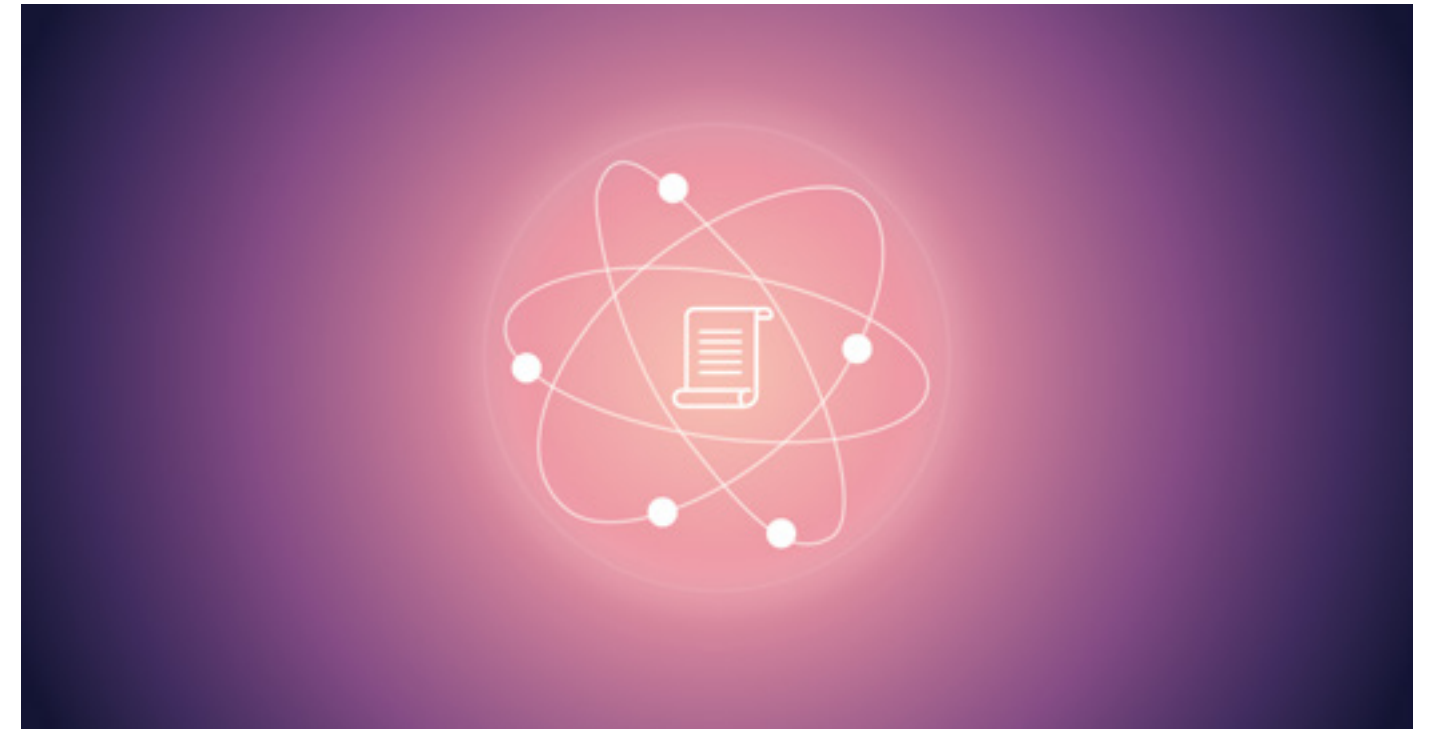
Sometimes we are clearly reminded of the magic of life. It shows itself in the form of a perfect coincidence, the guidance of intuition, and splashes of inner knowing. And it leaves us in absolute amazement, thinking how this could possibly happen. In these moments we start to notice that there is much more in life than we see and know. And when we notice these little miracles and feel grateful about them, they show up more and more.



It was like that with me. Irrationally perfect events with positive consequences started to happen to me regularly. I could not ignore them any more as simple coincidences. For example, I suddenly had the feeling to go to an event where I met one of the most special friends in my life. Or while traveling I was able to intuitively find a fountain on a hot summer day in an unknown city.

Such events became so regular that they encouraged me to start to play with this magic and to test it consciously. For example, in my first year of university I noticed that in exams I always intuitively learned the material for which there were questions. So in the remaining years I prepared only a few answers and I always picked the right material and never failed an exam.

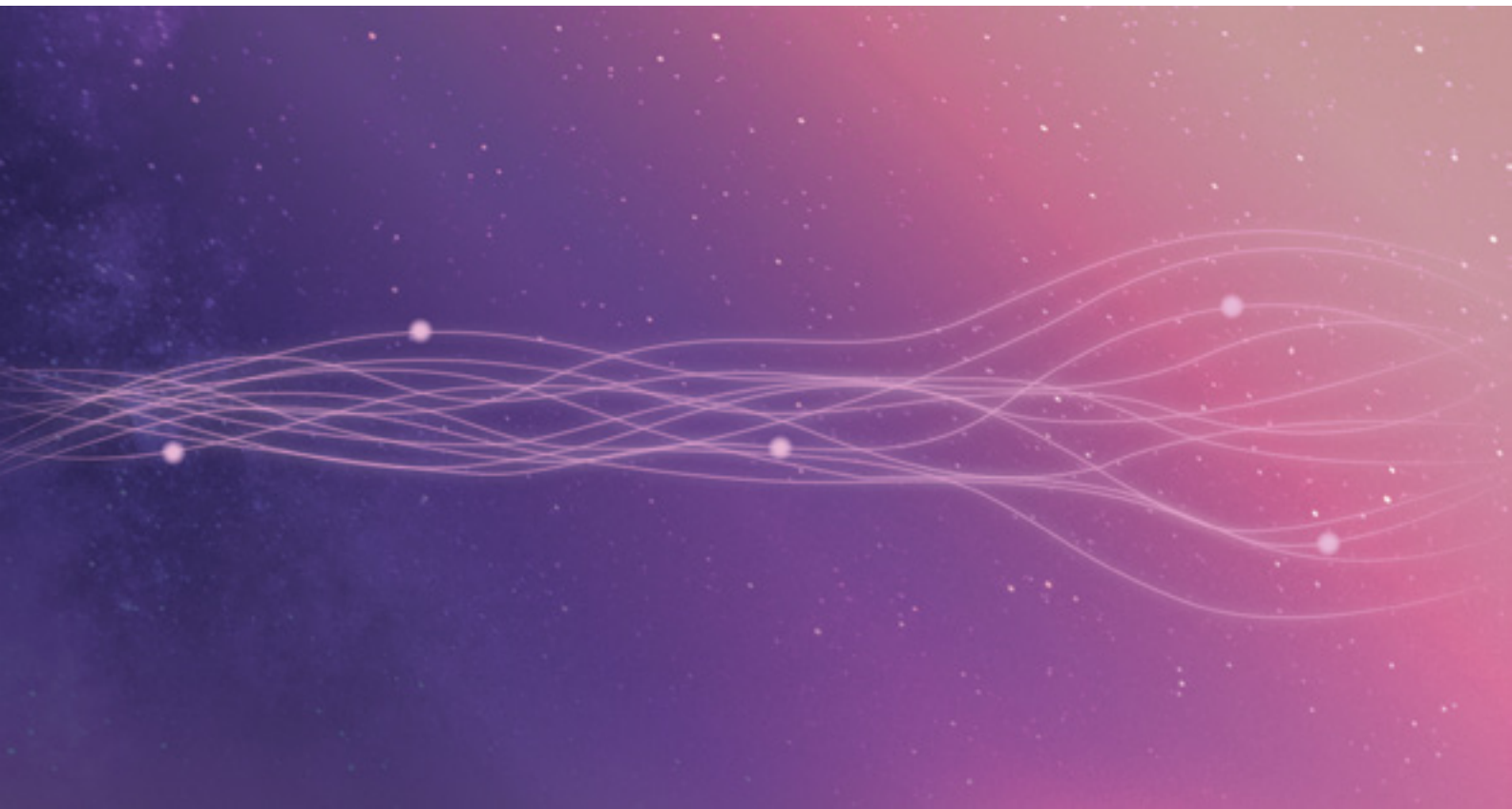
With time I started to perceive these magical moments as a natural and beautiful part of my daily life. But they also sparked my interest to understand more deeply how life was



actually functioning. Through these small wonders I recognized that life is much more mysterious than I was told in my family, school, university and through the mass media.

Gradually I realized that I had fallen ‘asleep’ and forgotten that life is a secret mystery. As a child I was living this mystery and discovering it every day with amazement. But with time, I became so busy with other things – school, university, job etc. – that I forgot to explore the world by myself. I was mainly consuming the results of the discoveries of others, such as modern scientists and philosophers. But I became aware that I had to take initiative and become a discoverer and a spiritual scientist for myself.

As I consciously experimented with this magic more and more, I noticed that behind all events were similar principles and patterns. They became clearer to me, when I stumbled on the widely known law of attraction. It partly explained the wonders I was experiencing.



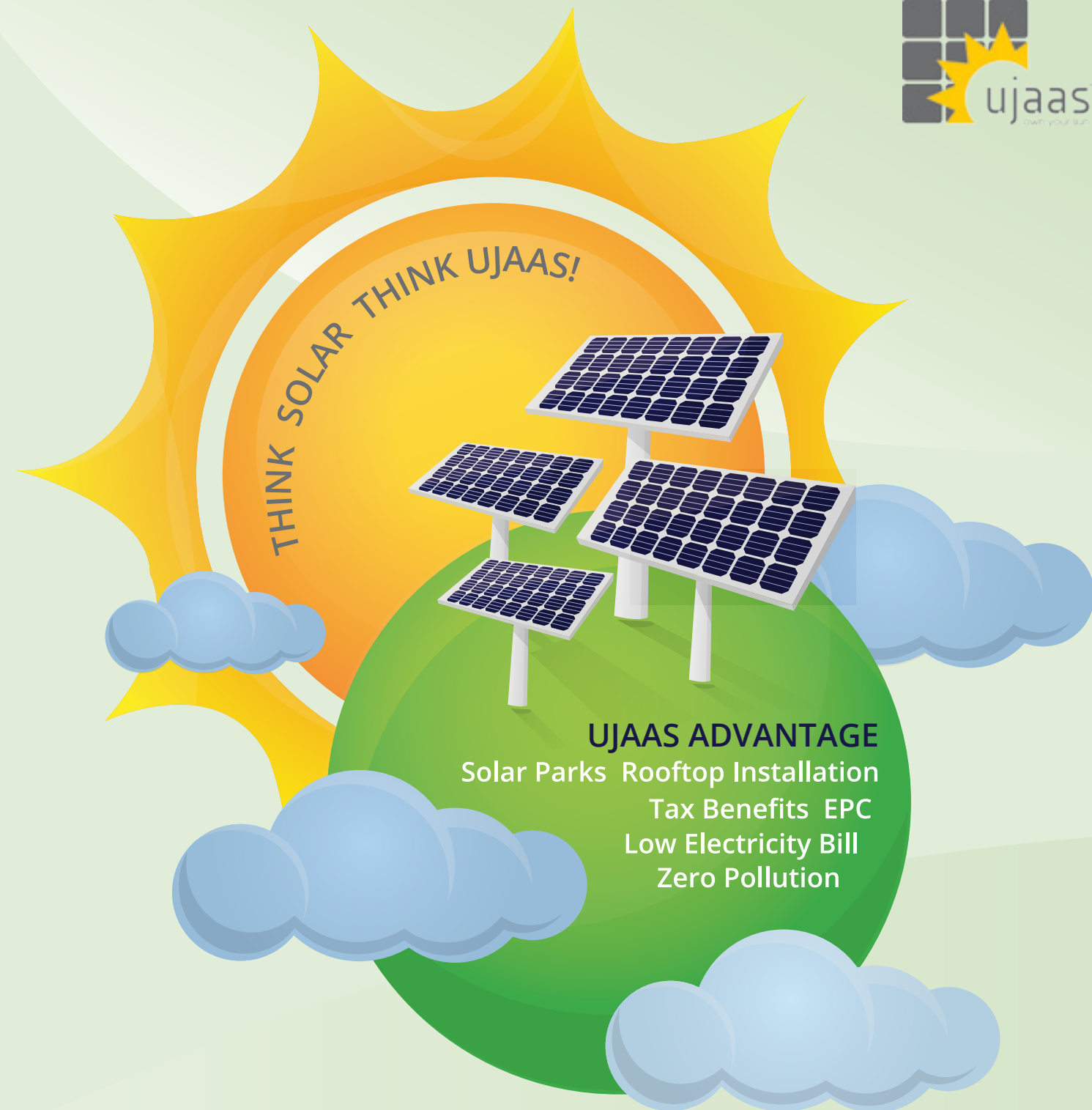
With this new knowledge I dived into new experiments, and met a lot of success in consciously creating the things I wanted in life, but also had regular failures and disappointment. There was something missing. And it came to me that the law of attraction was just a piece of a bigger puzzle: the universal or spiritual laws.

So I discovered that there is a whole beautifully designed system of interconnected laws, which govern life in the universe and influence each and every aspect of it. While exploring the other laws, such as the law of divine oneness, the law of rhythm etc., I understood that we need to align with all universal laws in order to live a fulfilling and meaningful life.

The law of attraction is often used just as a way for people to get what they want in life. Then its deeper spiritual meaning in the wholeness of the universal laws is missed. That is why people fail in manifesting what they wish in their lives, because of lack of knowledge about finer spiritual aspects of the universal laws and their interconnectedness.

With practice, I recognized other reasons for my lack of success in using the laws in my life. One of them was in not understanding that the universal laws are constant laws of nature, just as the ones known to modern science and taught in school. They are as real and predictable as the laws of physics, chemistry or astronomy. So if you are using the spiritual laws and do not get the desired results, it is not because the laws do not work suddenly. It is because we do not know or apply all aspects of the laws correctly. The universal laws are as precise as the laws of mathematics. So you have to develop a deeper understanding of finer aspects of the laws and take some time to practice to use them successfully ●

To discover more about the magic of the universal laws, I warmly invite you to explore a project called the Illustrated Universal Laws. See more at: <http://illustrateduniversallaws.com/>.

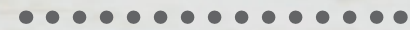


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Improve Your Blood *Circulation*

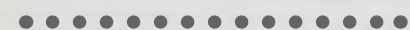
Eat plenty of fresh vegetables and fruits. They contain bioflavonoids that strengthen your capillaries and help with blood flow.



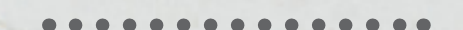
Reduce processed foods.



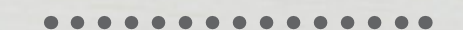
Green tea improves the functioning of the cells that line the capillaries. It is best to drink organic green tea, and don't use boiling water, as it destroys the antioxidants: 70 ° C is fine.



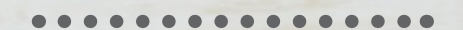
Parsley naturally dilates blood vessels, improving memory. It also contains vitamins B12 and C, which improve circulation.



Cayenne pepper contains capsaicin, which gives the peppers their heat. In days gone by, people used to sprinkle it inside their socks at night to get rid of chilblains.



Ginger is a vasodilator, and a great anti-inflammatory. A cup of ginger tea daily will boost your immunity and improve your circulation.



WRITING MY WAY TO PEACE



MEGHANA ANAND explores the benefits of reflective writing in finding inner peace.

A couple of years ago, while on a camping trip, I enjoyed a game of hide-and-seek with my little son. When it was time for me to seek, I found him sitting under one of the camp beds, still and serene, with his eyes closed. When I asked, “What were you doing?” he replied, “I was looking for inner peace.” I realized he was imitating Master Shifu from Kung Fu Panda, which he had watched a few days ago.

We are constantly in search of everlasting peace.

Well, doesn't that line sound clichéd? To me it surely does, but I cannot deny the fact that I look for peace, too. And most of the time, like others, I look for it in the wrong place, in the wrong company, or rather in the wrong direction. In my search, needless to say, I get hit, bruised, hurt, reach a dead end, and then wonder where to go next. A dead end forces me to make a u-turn and ... eureka!

“Oh, I have looked everywhere but within myself. Why not give it a try?”

So I muster courage and peek within. I am not at all happy with what I see, and with what I feel. It is quite nauseating, to be very frank, but I persist. And over time I have discovered a neat tool to help me in this exercise of knowing myself, facing myself, and finding peace within myself by making peace with myself.

Writing and maintaining a journal has helped me immensely as a self-check exercise and a major stress-buster. My diary has been a silent confidant since I was a teenager: I could confide my worst fears and share my most passionate secrets. As I grew up it also became a reflective and meditative tool for self-improvement.

Whenever I feel the need to vent something that otherwise may not be understood or taken in the right spirit by my friends and family, I turn to my secret inanimate friend for solace. I write even when I am unable to understand myself. It helps in more ways than one.

I run through the following steps before beginning my tête-à-tête:

FIRST

I find a quiet place to sit. The space within and the space without both matter. So I also take a few minutes to find the inner space, the silence within, and relax.

SECOND

In that moment of stillness and silence, I feel myself:

What is bothering me?

What is exciting me?

How is my current state-of-mind affecting my routine and my relationships?

Is the cause of any irritation or excitement outside or inside me?

Do I like it?

Do I want to change it?
and so on...

THIRD

Then I begin writing exactly what I feel, honestly, truthfully, completely aware that there is nobody to question or judge me. I can bare myself before myself.



Then I begin writing exactly what I feel, honestly, truthfully, completely aware that there is nobody to question or judge me. I can bare myself before myself.

Often, at the end of this very private conversation I have with myself, I observe a strange kind of peace and lightness settling within, even before I finish narrating or writing all that I wanted to share. Sometimes an answer emerges; sometimes I realize I don't need an answer any more.

Be it a bad day at work or an irritable day at home, I have always found reflective writing to be a very effective tool for venting stress and making peace with myself. Often, it awakens me to a higher calling or longing. I realize that making peace with myself is the first step towards finding peace within myself. It inspires and motivates me to delve further into my quest for everlasting peace and happiness.



As I sit at my desk, under the dim glow of a lamp, and write this, I pause for a second to gaze out the window. The sky is overcast. The lush green of a wild tree soothes the vision, and my ears perk up to the hoot of a wise old owl.

Nature stirs up this mysterious longing further.

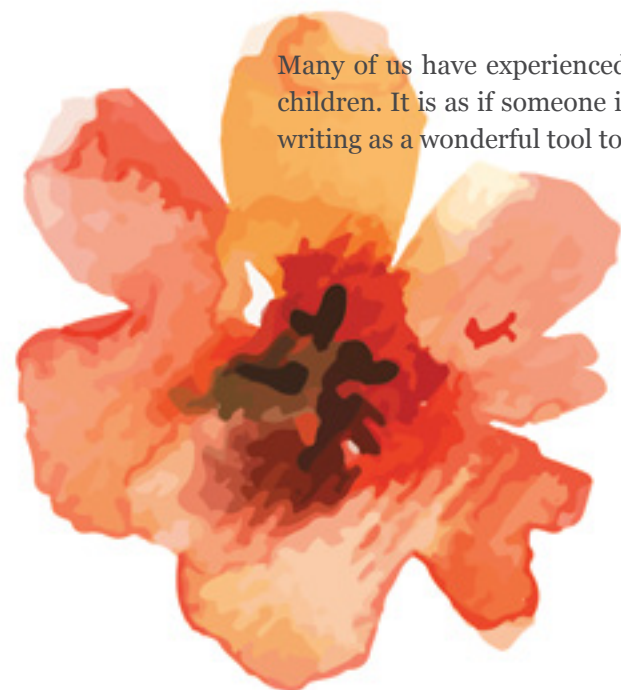
The resplendent sunrise ushering the dawn of a new day; the orange horizon at sunset; the song of the cuckoo just before the rain; the fragrance of drenched earth during the monsoon; the silver moon over the mystical desert; the vastness of the ocean; the twinkling stars in the infinite sky; the gurgling laughter of a child, as she looks at everything with wonder and innocence – such hazy memories surface from the depths of my being and bring life to words.

Many of us have experienced such stirrings or yearnings in our lives, especially when we were children. It is as if someone is knocking at the door of the heart, from the inside. I see reflective writing as a wonderful tool to explore these mysterious yearnings of the heart ●

Knock, knock ...
Instead of asking, "Who's there?"
I open the door to see
who is waiting on the other side

Do not be satisfied with the stories that come before you. Unfold your own myth.

–Rumi



Love is Always Here and Now

BARBARA J. LEVIN O'RIORDAN shares her experience of calling on Love and the realization that it does not need explanation.

My old motto used to be, "I can always take a small step." I still love that motto, but a new one has taken first place: "Love is always here and now."

The 20th century spiritual Guide, Babuji Maharaj, tells us that we can "call on Love".



A few months ago, someone insulted me quite unpleasantly, and I decided that I did not want to waste time with my usual reactions of aggression or withdrawal. I had done those things too many times and was well aware that they do not really go anywhere. So I called on Love. I specifically asked, "Fill me with Love so I can give it to so-and-so." I was amazed to find that the response from Nature was immediate. I felt Love coming into me and going out to the person who had insulted me.

That was my first experience in calling on Love, and it was an introduction to new learning. I started to see that I could call on Love any time I wanted. The only stipulation was that when Love came, I had to give it away. I realized that I am not here to fill myself with Love for my own enjoyment, or at the expense of others.

I realized that I am not here to fill myself with Love for my own enjoyment, or at the expense of others.



UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

November 20, 2016



We know that when we love ourselves we can also love everyone else, and that when we do not love ourselves, loving anyone else is impossible. I also discovered that if I love another person, that love also generalizes to everyone.

I found that I was able to 'borrow' Love and all good things from those in whom those good things inhered. For example, Brijrani-Mother, the wife of Lalaji Maharaj, was noted for her love of all Lalaji's followers. She is our Mother, and a Mother cannot deny love to any child. One day, I was annoyed with a particular person, and, in that state of mind, could not find any love for them. So I asked Brijrani-Mother if I could borrow love from her so that I might treat that person with Love.

After I became filled with her Love, I had the idea that I could borrow any good quality from anybody or anything, so long as I used it for Love's sake. For example, I could borrow patience from the mountains, and wonderment from the stars.

I started to understand that the human being is the center of the world – not as is commonly understood through the right to plunder the world for what it can offer, but, instead, through the right to ask for the use of anything in the service of the right purpose. I could take what I needed, so long as I was borrowing and paying forward, not taking.

For a while I was a little confused because I could not discern whom or what I really loved. I also wondered whether, in borrowing from the sun and the mountains and the sky, I was lapsing into some kind of paganism. But then I learned that, "Love exists for its own sake."

That statement filled me with extraordinary joy because I immediately understood that I did not have to ask any questions about Love. I did not have to wonder

from whom it came, or whom it was for, or to whom it belonged, or who had a right to it. It was just there and I could call on it.

Then I realized that I could call on it not because it is always 'there', but because it is always 'here'. I cannot really explain the difference between 'there' and 'here', except to say that 'there' seems as if it is somehow far away and 'here' seems as if it is immediate. If something is 'here', well then 'here' is not tomorrow but now.

So I started to see that Love is always here and now. I do not need to understand more than that.

I must say, however, that knowing Love is always here and now seems to have filled me with another kind of understanding that cannot be explained in words. I suppose I could mine this feeling and come up with a lot of explanations, and even some good ones – about feeling fearless, and following rather than leading, and knowing that nothing comes from me, and knowing that each moment, no matter how pleasant or unpleasant, is worth more than a cluster of rubies – but none of those explanations could possibly suffice ●

I found that I was able to 'borrow' Love and all good things from those in whom those good things inhered.

"This year, I wish to emphasize the importance of ensuring that the commitments made by the international community to the world's children are extended to a group of children who are often forgotten or overlooked: those deprived of their liberty."

-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

On the 14th of December 1954, the UN General Assembly recommended that all countries institute a Universal Children's Day. On the 20th of November, in 1959 the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and in 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty. It sets out a number of children's rights including the right to life, to health, to education and to play, as well as the right to family life, to be protected from violence, to have their views heard and not to be discriminated against.

This day reminds us that we all have a responsibility to promote and celebrate children's right, and continuously contribute to a joyful, friendly, healthy environment for children in all parts of the world, through our thoughts, prayers and actions.

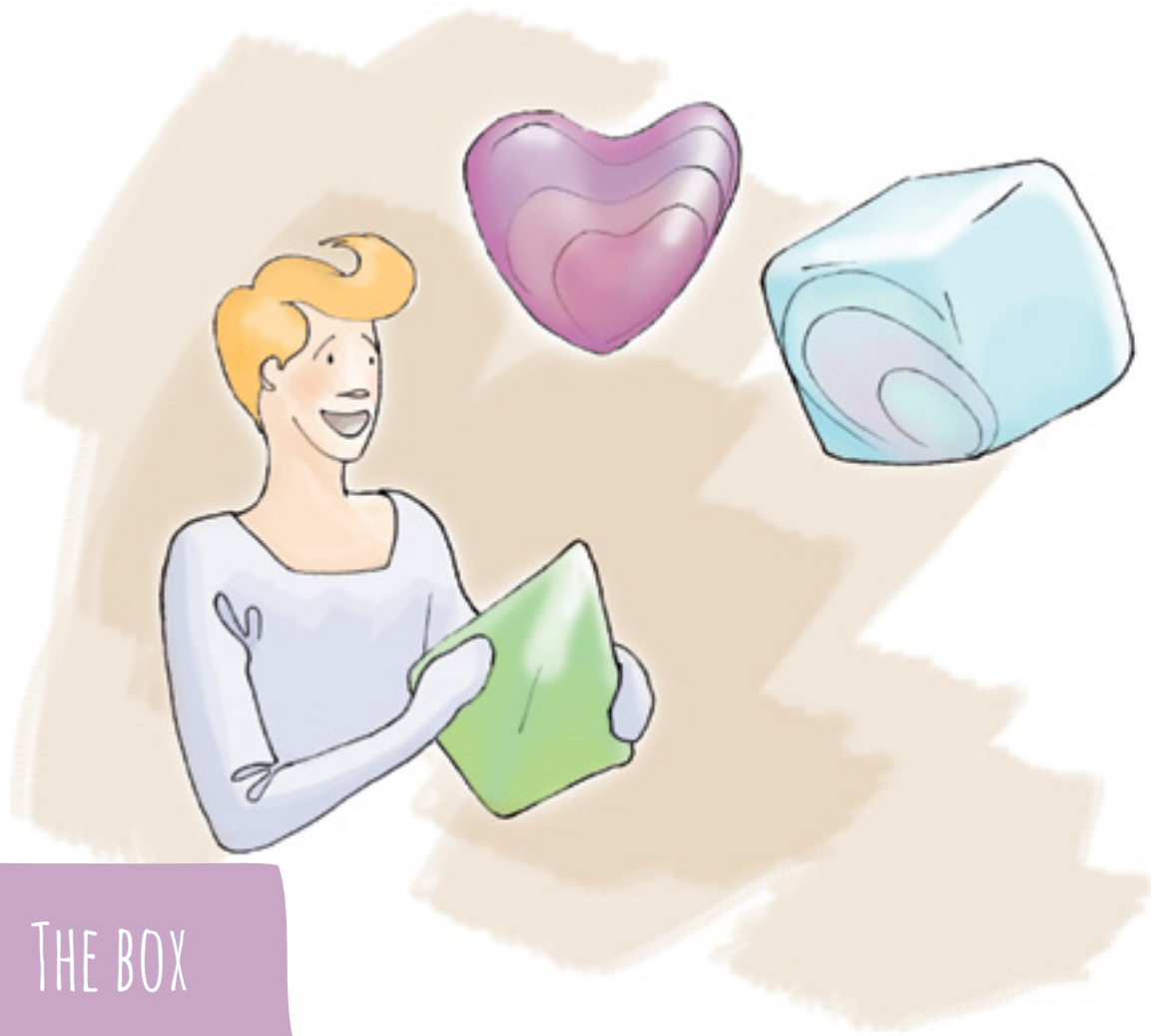
This is an invitation to participate in some way, no matter how small, to promote the wellbeing of children around the world.

What will you do?



PETE, THE BLOWER OF BUBBLES - PART 2

CHANGE EVENTUALLY COMES



THE BOX

As Pete continued to make his bubbles lighter, his happiness knew no bounds. He began to explore new possibilities and his bubbles started to take all kinds of shapes – rectangular, octagonal, even square! His ventures did not go well with his neighbors, who did not live in round bubbles; they lived in square boxes. Unable to understand Pete and his bubbles, they began to feel he was becoming a threat, making bubble boxes that were not legal. The square box people discussed the matter among them and the matter started to take on serious proportions. Pete began to be regarded as a dangerous man who could confuse people in making bubbles look like square boxes and who would influence the young ones to think that they too could do anything they wanted.

And so it was decided that Pete, the bubble maker, should be re-educated. To this end, he would be put in a place where he would learn to think the way a box maker should and no longer the way a bubble maker does.

This place was called prison.

PETE IN PRISON

In prison, Pete was not allowed to make any big bubbles until he had completed a rehabilitation program, so, being the good man he was, he promised not to. As the days dragged on, Pete began to connect with his fellow prisoners and his kind heart was soon moved by their life stories and laments.

He thought they would feel closer to their dear ones if he made them bubbles that could transmit their thoughts and feelings. He asked the prison warden's permission to make soap for every one. Then he sought permission to make soap

bubbles. The permission was given as part of his rehabilitation program: a project to build a production box for soap bubbles for kids. "Be careful now! Only soap bubbles, and no other bubbles," the warden chided.

The warden had no idea that Pete could change soap bubbles into bubbly balloons filled with loving thoughts.

So Pete started making soap bubbles in the prison yard, and he taught the prisoners how to make their own bubbly balloons. The prison guards could not understand why the prisoners were enjoying themselves like kids, making soap bubbles. The prisoners made and tamed their bubbles, and attached pieces of string. Once night had fallen, they filled these bubbly balloons with thoughts of tenderness and love and released them into the sky to the persons

they loved. Every bubbly balloon would fly across the sky

to the loved person. When pulled down with

the string, the bubble would burst and

drench that person in a flow of

love and tender thoughts the

prisoner had sent. Thus it

was that Pete spread joy

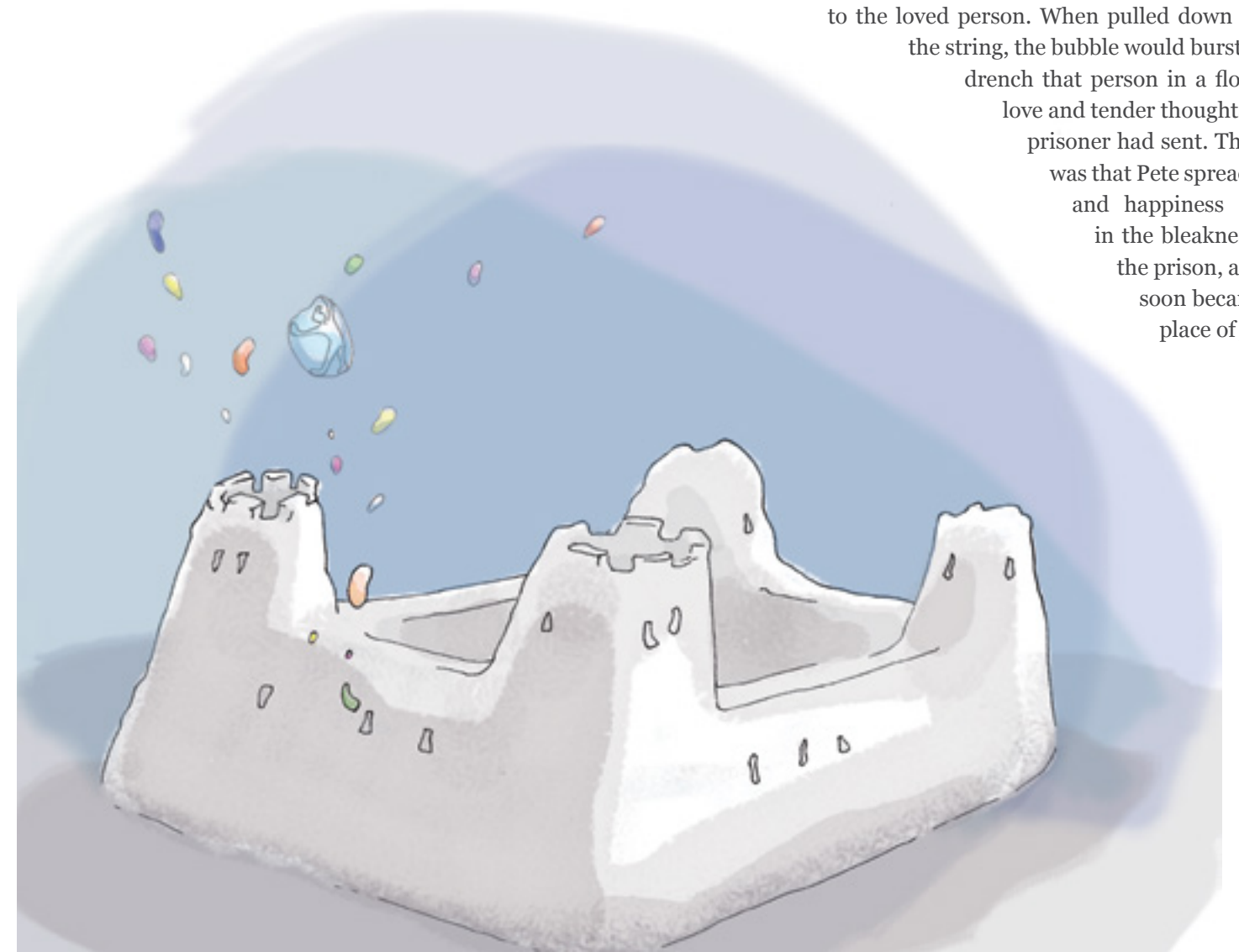
and happiness even

in the bleakness of

the prison, and it

soon became a

place of joy.



PETE'S ESCAPE

Yet Pete missed his family and desperately yearned to be with them. His family sent him many messages and one day he received a message that they were going to work out an escape plan for him. He suddenly began to fear for his family. He definitely had to escape, but how? One day as he was staring out of his tiny cell window at the bubbly balloons the prisoners were releasing at night, an idea struck him. He would go back home in a bubbly balloon! He knew he would be breaking his promise, but worry for his family eclipsed everything else in his mind.

The next day, he set about making a bubble big enough for him to fit inside. That very evening, at the time the bubbles were being launched, he hid within his bubbly balloon, which rose up together with the others. The guards noticed the bigger bubble as sheeny as the rest and smiled, thinking it was just another one of dreamy Pete's soap bubbles.

Once over the prison walls, the bubbly balloons moved away in different directions. Pete's bubbly balloon rose higher and higher into the sky. It rose so high that it finally burst and Pete started falling and falling until he reached the ground with a thud. In a state of shock, he opened his eyes, checked his limbs one by one, and found that nothing was broken. He carefully got up and started to look around. Where was he? Where was his house? There was a dry riverbed close by.

"What are you doing here?" Pete asked.

"More to the point, what are you doing here?" she asked with a smile.

"I am lost."



After walking for some time along the bed of the river, he caught sight of a shining stone. It was heart-shaped and something was written on it: "Where is your prison?"

"Bubbles, boxes: what if they are my prisons?" he thought.

"Right you are, Pete," a little voice said behind him. "It took you quite some time to figure that out!"

It was the lady who sold the bubbly balloons.

"Well, why did you escape from your prison? You promised to finish the rehabilitation program."

"How on earth do you know this?" asked Pete.

"Oh, word travels fast, just like your bubbly balloon did!" she grinned.

"Anyway, tell me, why did you break your promise? Don't you trust divine justice?"

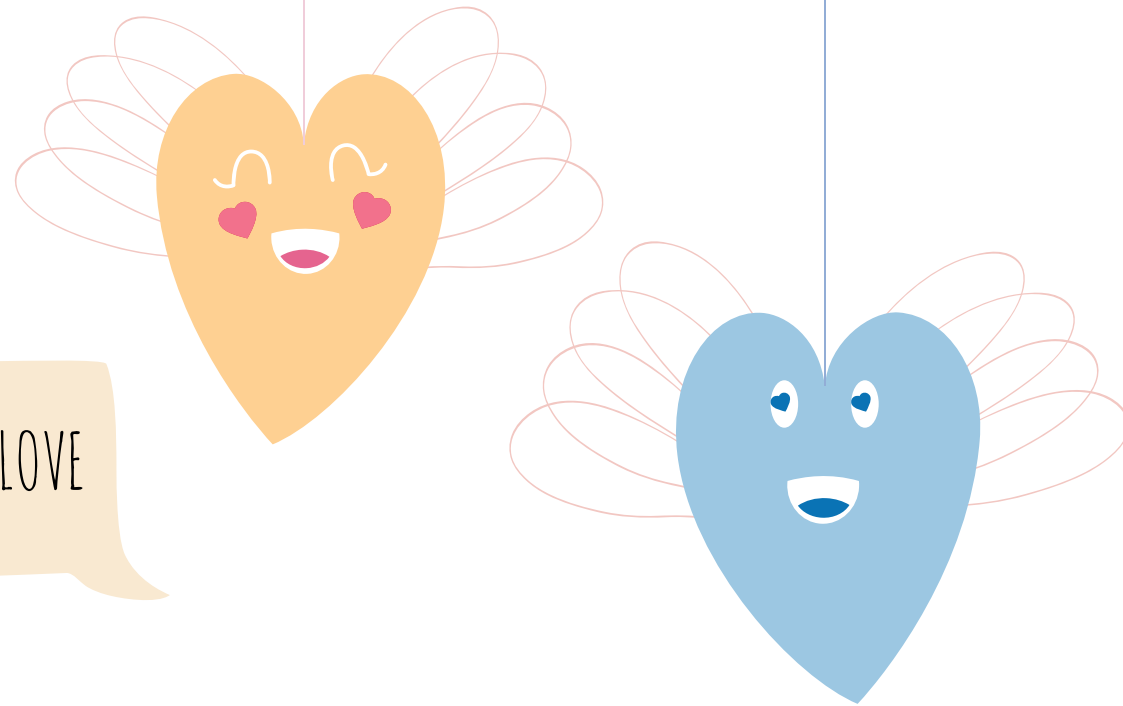
"I do believe in divine justice, but men's justice often does not work accordingly, I'm afraid," replied Pete.

"Right you are. Yet there is always a reason for whatever happens in this world. The truth is, however, that we cannot understand it. Why did you use your powers to get out of that human prison, instead of having faith in divine protection?"

"I don't know. It's an old habit. Whenever people want to lock me up, I want to break free and run away. I cannot stand injustice. I want to feel free."

"Free! Free from what? You are a slave to your own tendencies when you want to make bubbles at all costs to get out of difficult situations. Then you get into still more difficult ones. Now they will hunt you down even more."

ACCEPT AND LOVE



Pete stood silently. “Thank you. I understand what you are trying to tell me. I must accept and follow the course of events, even though they are beyond my limited comprehension. I will surrender to the local authorities and let the courts decide.”

The old lady smiled at him: “When we met for the first time, I told you the secret of making bubbly balloons. Now I’ll tell you another big secret. Go deep into your heart. Search within for the source of light in your heart and let it fill your whole being. Meditate, over and over again, especially in the mornings before the sunrise, during the stillness of the dawn. Let that subtle light shine out and overflow until it radiates all around you. Then, let it flow still further, embracing your house, your environment, your neighbors, your city, your country, the entire Earth, the moon and the whole solar system, and all the galaxies in the universe and beyond.

“Aren’t you going a bit too far there?”

“Just a little bit, but not that much,” she chuckled. “Our capacities are endless. Yet we let our minds become locked in boxes and bubbles. We believe in many things, and all that limits us. Our hearts is our safest place, within us. It is a place where we love and where we are being loved.

“During your day, when you meet other people, or when you think about someone, you connect a thread of vibration between their hearts and your heart. Your open heart will transform that light into a universal love. Then you will see other threads of loving light come to your heart and make it grow further. Just try, and see what happens!”

“My dear lady,” said Pete, “I see now. I understand now. Thank you for unveiling my eyes. But, all I can think of right now is my family. I don’t think I will ever see them again, for I am lost. How will I ever get back home?” “Hmmm. Why don’t you cross the riverbed just here and walk straight ahead for some time. You will recognize your town very soon.”

Surprised to hear that his home was so near, Pete rushed in joy towards the rocks and started walking. As he turned to thank the old lady, he was startled. She had vanished.

BACK HOME

Sure enough, when Pete reached the other bank of the river he saw his town. He was all the time thinking of what the bubbly balloon lady had said. He reached home to find his daughters and wife standing at the door waiting for him.

Pete’s life changed and so did he. Often in the winter evenings Pete’s daughters would cajole him to recount his adventures to them.

So if ever you meet a short lady who sells balloons on the end of multi-coloured strings, and who laughs heartily, approach her and listen to her advice.

And don’t forget to fill your hearts with the softest, subtlest light. In fact, it is already there, you just have to find it! ●



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLAIRE BIGAND

Flying kiss flipbook

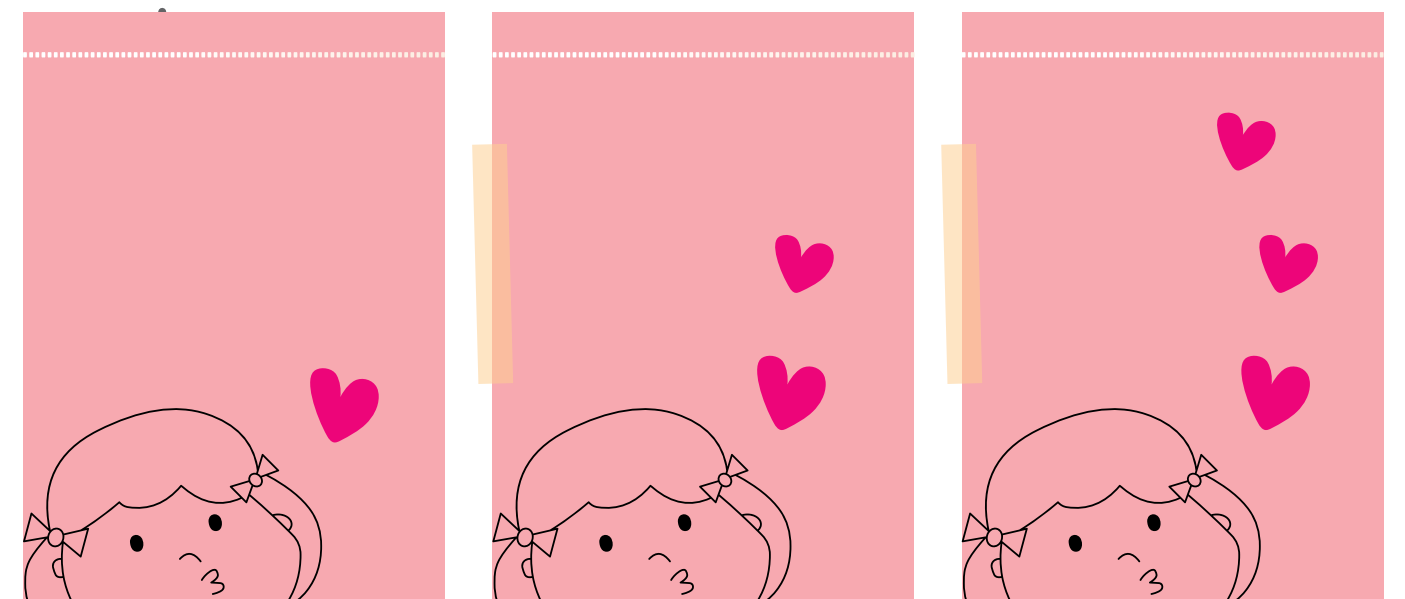
This simple project is going to make more than one person happy. Your grandparents, parents, a friend that you have not seen for a long time: who would not like to receive a kiss?

Here is what you need:

- A picture of yourself, from the side, showing you blowing a kiss from your hand
- A printer
- Regular paper or photo paper that fits your printer
- Scissors
- Glue
- Thick tape
- Permanent markers of the color you choose

Activity

- Print your photo 8 to 10 times on sheets of paper.
- Use your marker to draw hearts flying from your hand, shifting their position from one picture to another and adding hearts one by one, as shown in the example.
- Glue and staple all the pictures together, in the right order.
- Add some heavy tape as a binding.
- Flip through it!
- It makes a beautiful greeting card.





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