

September 2022

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Our Noble Youth

DAAJI

Inform, Inspire,
Engage

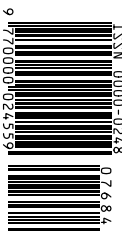
JEREMY GILLEY

4 Phases of
Community

**STEVE MACADAM &
EMILIE MOGENSEN**

Art Therapy for
Human Suffering

**GUILA CLARA
KESSOUS**



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heartfulness
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Peacefulness

Dear readers,

September 21 is International Day of Peace, and to celebrate we feature an interview with peace activist, film maker, and founder of Peace One Day, Jeremy Gilley. We also hear from Victor Kannan, Pari Deshmukh, and Alanda Greene on peaceful self-care; Steve Macadam, Emilie Mogensen, and Ichak Adizes on peace@work; Karishma Stretton and Lisa Raven on peaceful relationships; Ananya Patel and Sangeeth Parvatam on environmental peace; and Guila Clara Kessous on creativity for peace.

Daaji's much-awaited new book, *The Wisdom Bridge: Nine Principles to Live a Life that Echoes in the Heart of Your Loved Ones*, will be released later this month, and we give you a sneak preview in his article.

We hope this edition will inspire reflection and action.

Happy reading!
The editors



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DAAJI

Daaji is the Heartfulness Guide. He is an innovator and researcher, equally at home in the fields of spirituality, science, and the evolution of consciousness. He has taken our understanding of human potential to a new level.



JEREMY GILLEY

Jeremy founded the non-profit, Peace One Day. Because of his efforts, in 2001 the UN General Assembly adopted September 21 as an annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence. Jeremy is also an author and has received significant recognition for his inspiring promotion of peace around the world.



STEVE MACADAM

Steve is a senior executive and conscious CEO who was the President of EnPro, and is a director on the boards of Louisiana-Pacific Corporation and Valvoline Inc. He is committed to ethical behavior, sound corporate governance, profound people engagement, and long-term decisions for the greater good.



GUILA CLARA KESSOUS

Guila was appointed UNESCO Artist for Peace in January 2012, in light of her commitment to promoting and defending human rights through art. She has taught at Sciences Po, Harvard University, Boston and Oxford Universities, University of Geneva, and the St. Petersburg Conservatory, amongst others.



ICHAK ADIZES

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



KARISHMA STRETTON

Karishma has an educational background in Medicine and Law. She has worked as a doctor in the Australian public hospital system, and taught medical students at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. Her expertise in parenting integrates her experience as a medical professional and a parent.

contributors



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Pari is a board certified psychiatrist, a certified psychotherapist, and a meditation trainer in both Heartfulness and Mindfulness. He is also an elected fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and Society of Addiction Medicine.



ALANDA GREENE

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



LISA RAVEN

Lisa is the Executive Director at Returning to Spirit, and a member of the delegation of indigenous leaders who met the Pope to invite him to Canada to apologize for the harms inflicted on generations of indigenous families. She is from Hollow Water First Nation, Manitoba.



VICTOR KANNAN

Victor is a Director for Heartfulness Institute, USA, a practitioner of Heartfulness Meditation, and a trainer for more than 30 years. As a career CFO he combines the benefits of meditation in everyday management and responsibilities. He lives with his wife in Atlanta and has a daughter.



ANANYA PATEL

Ananya is a designer and illustrator who enjoys finding dynamic ways to tell stories. She works on projects with social impact, and runs a youth collective bringing innovative design approaches to climate action and gender equality.

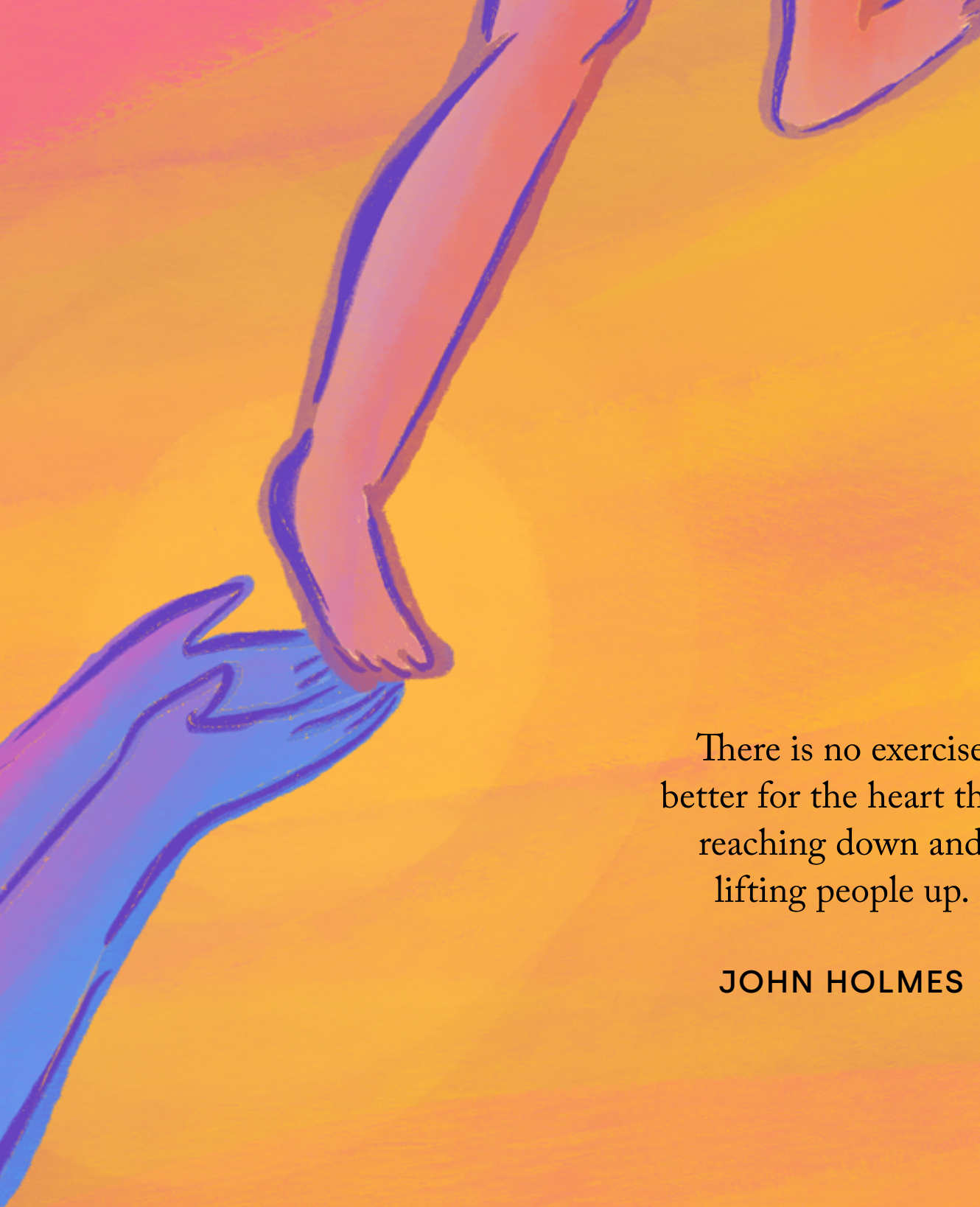


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Sangeeth is a Product Manager in the energy sector, exploring Nature Based Solutions to achieve zero carbon emissions, both for corporates and countries. He leads the Forests By Heartfulness initiative, helping with strategy, industry outreach, and collaboration with other NGOs.

Self-Care

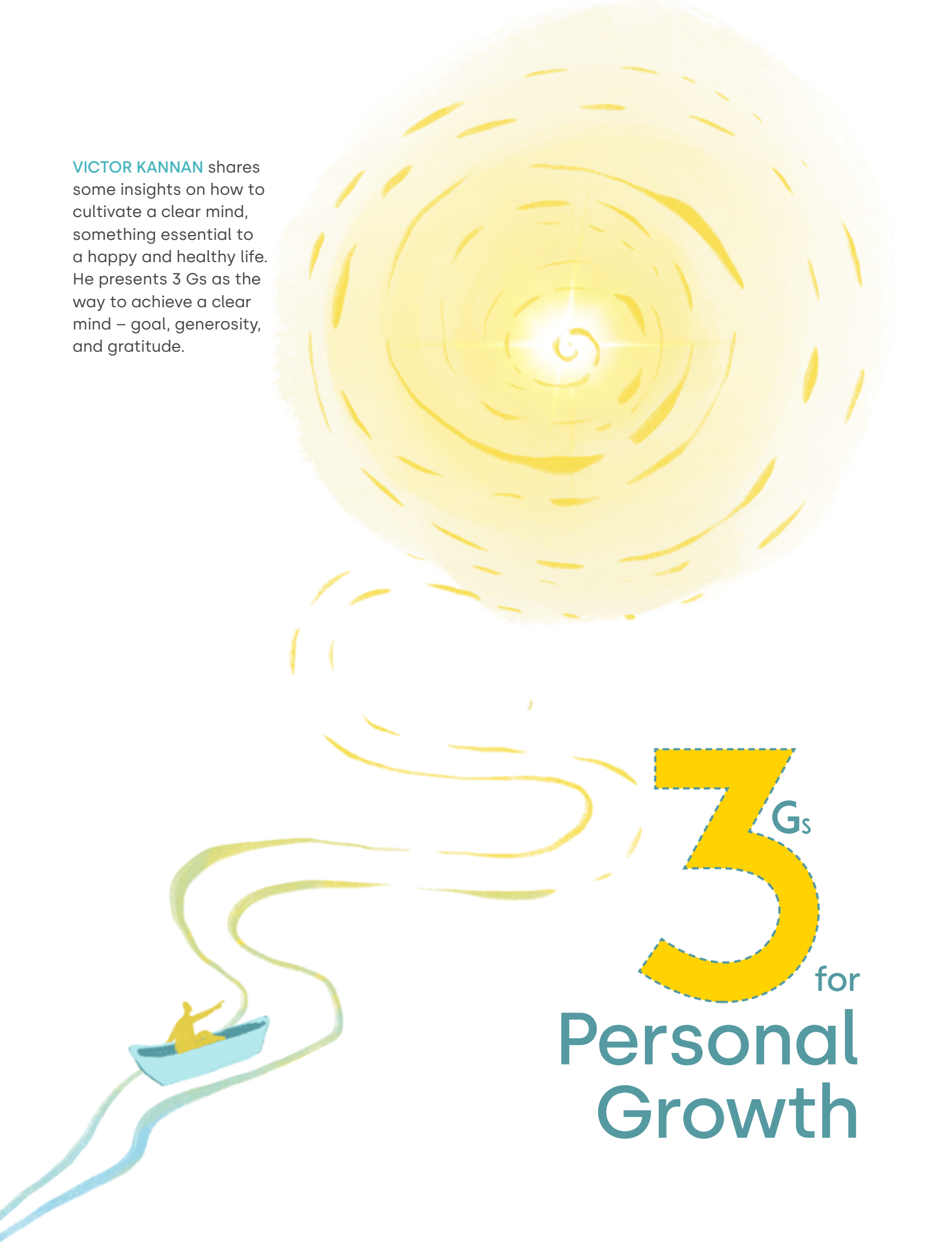




There is no exercise
better for the heart than
reaching down and
lifting people up.

JOHN HOLMES

VICTOR KANNAN shares some insights on how to cultivate a clear mind, something essential to a happy and healthy life. He presents 3 Gs as the way to achieve a clear mind – goal, generosity, and gratitude.



3^{Gs} for Personal Growth

G1: BE GOAL-ORIENTED

Having a goal helps with clear thinking. Without a goal we are without direction, purpose, and meaning. When we are goal-oriented, we are not bothered by unnecessary things.

Having multiple main goals is a problem. Multiple channels of attention scatters our focus, so we are not effective in the pursuit of any goal. It helps to set one overarching goal. Such a goal is generally big and aspirational. It holds deep meaning and profound purpose. Most of us have one main goal, like becoming the best version of ourselves, or realizing our ultimate potential.

A big goal energizes us as we proceed in life. It continues to be more inspiring, and we become more enthusiastic as we march along. There is no fatigue when we set a goal of this nature. It is not limited. An unlimited goal keeps on going, and we keep asking, what's next? That's exciting. Every day, like a lotus flower that keeps coming up anew, lovely conditions continue to emerge. Not all of them can be expressed, but we look forward to them. However subtle the flowering may be, we are able to feel it. It is tangible. That kind of goal keeps us excited and enthusiastic to keep going. It determines our orientation to the infinite.

The goal determines the orientation, and the orientation decides the journey. When that happens, we adopt a conducive lifestyle. If we are serious and clear with our goal, we simplify our life and make sure that everything is conducive to this goal-oriented existence.

The goal demands that we avoid unnecessary things. For example, many of us say "there's nothing wrong with acquiring things; it is only attachment to them that is the problem," but I'm not able to understand that completely. Why acquire things? It requires effort, and that effort can be applied to something more conducive for the goal. It is worthwhile to talk about balanced existence in this context. It doesn't mean balancing every good activity with something questionable. Balanced existence is not balancing necessary things and unnecessary things. It is best to avoid unnecessary things.

Clarity is an important mental quality. Clarity of mind and purity of heart make for a high level of discernment and proper decision-making. They both help in correct thinking and right understanding of the people and situations around us. Lack of clarity results in a downward spiral of confusion, fear, anger, restlessness, and lack of happiness. It makes things worse and causes harm to our near and dear ones.

How to develop clarity, leading to correct thinking and right understanding? I contemplated this question for a few days and came to the conclusion that we need these 3 Gs.



Right understanding is essential, and correct thinking precedes right understanding. To have correct thinking we need to clear out the inner cobwebs and simplify the inner environment. This is usually facilitated by Heartfulness rejuvenation practices and other practices to remain meditative. But for right understanding we need to have generosity.

G2: BE GENEROUS

How to ensure right understanding? To answer this, we may have to ask one more question: How to avoid mis-understanding and wrong understanding?

Misunderstanding happens due to prejudice, jealousy, impatience, anger, fear, insecurity, etc. Wrong understanding is due to the conviction we have in our misunderstanding. This is because we are defensive, proud, and egoistic. All this colors our vision and perception.

What is the antidote? Generosity. If we are generous towards ourselves, we have self-compassion. We are not hard on ourselves. If we made a mistake it's okay. Pause,

be self-compassionate, take the time to fix it.

If we are generous, we listen to others, we're empathetic toward others. This again gives us the necessary pause. When somebody says or does something, we can either misunderstand them or understand them correctly. Understanding them correctly doesn't mean that they have said or done the right thing, only that we have given ourselves the possibility of not misunderstanding.

Often, misunderstanding of others comes from jealousy, fear of failure, and insecurity. Jealousy arises mainly in close quarters, such as at work. The boss may praise somebody else for our work and we feel jealous. Jealousy can exist in the worst form between siblings. It is less talked about, like guilt, but it is extremely counterproductive to peace and progress.

The antidote to jealousy is also generosity. Jealousy and generosity cannot go together. When we are generous with our hearts, our time, our space, our minds, and our thoughts, it facilitates right understanding.

How to develop generosity?

Generosity is fostered when we give and love giving – time, space, things, and the emotional space

everyone needs to express themselves. Give and see. When you put a smile on people's faces, help them feel safe and welcome, and reduce their pain and suffering, see how you feel in your heart. If you repeatedly do this from a heart full of love, an enormous good will await you.

Another way to develop generosity is to develop contentment. It is difficult to be generous if you are not contented. If you think that what you have is not enough, how are you going to be generous? If you think you have enough, you will be generous.

Generosity is mainly in the giving. However, without a proper attitude towards receiving, life's day-to-day interaction of give and take is not complete.

How to develop generosity?

Generosity is fostered when we give and love giving – time, space, things, and the emotional space everyone needs to express themselves. Give and see.



G3: BE GRATEFUL

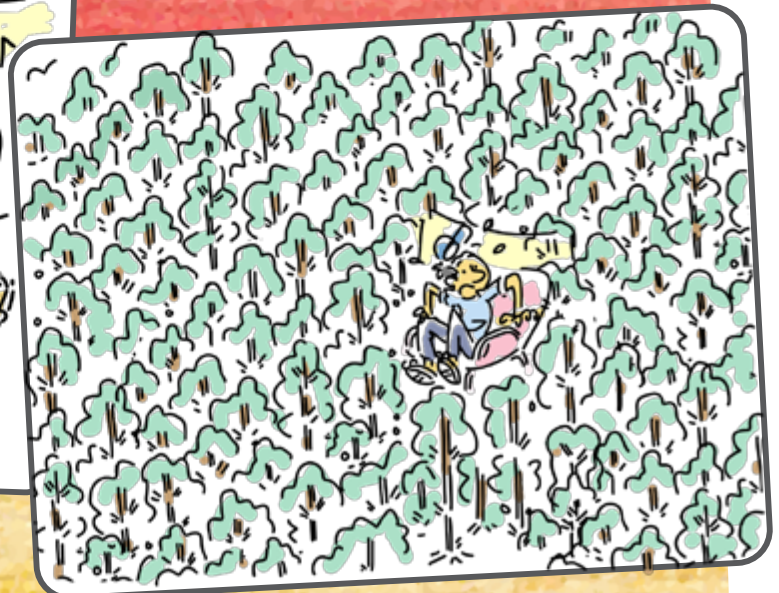
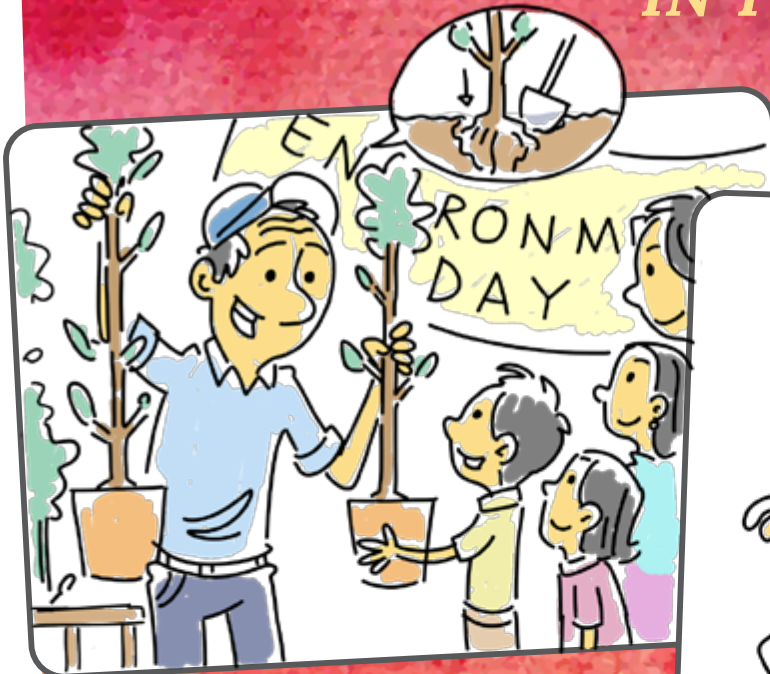
Being grateful also sets our inner climate very nicely. Generosity and gratitude go together – we put others first when we are generous, and we put others first when we are grateful. We are not complete without the many things that others do for us in our lives. Remembering those givers and those moments help to promote mutual respect, appreciation, and harmony.

Generosity in the giving and gratitude in the receiving completes the cycle of human interactions. If we develop generosity and gratitude, it takes care of the entire relationship cycle; giving and taking is what makes a relationship. We give time, we take time; we give things, we take things; we give knowledge, we receive knowledge; etc. We give generously and we receive with gratitude. It is a beautiful thing.

Generosity and gratitude also foster authenticity and humility. With these qualities in the heart, there is no room for jealousy or competition, anger or hatred. There is only harmony and contentment. When generosity and gratitude moderate our reactions and responses to situations, we maintain our steadiness and remain centered. With this sort of a heartfelt condition and inner environment, we will have correct thinking and right understanding. This helps with purity of heart and clarity of mind, irrespective of the situations we grow out of, just like a lotus.

Illustrations by ANANYA PATEL

WHY IS IT ALWAYS BETTER TO **WORK TOGETHER** ? IN TEAMS



BECAUSE TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK !



Common Misconceptions **About Addiction**

DR. PARI DESHMUKH is a board certified psychiatrist, a certified psychotherapist, and a meditation trainer in both Heartfulness and Mindfulness. He is also an elected fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and the Society of Addiction Medicine. He has a special interest in the common ground of science and spirituality, and their implications on the betterment of our mental health. Here he addresses some basic aspects of addiction, including common misconceptions.

What is addiction?

Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease, a complex interaction among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experiences. Many think that addiction is not treatable and is some form of moral defect or character defect, which is not true. It's just like high blood pressure or diabetes. Chronic means long-term; it can be a very long time including over a lifetime, but it is treatable.

The brain is involved in pushing the addiction, and there are

certain brain circuits that are more involved. One of them is the reward pathway.

There is also the component of genetics; if our family members have addiction disorders, our chances of addiction are more. Even if their addiction was in some other form, we may still be predisposed to it.

Then there is interaction with the environment. What kind of stimulus, rewards, and punishments is the environment giving us, and how is it guiding our behavior? That has a

Any form of activity can become an addiction, if it's spiraling out of control and leading to negative consequences in life.

tremendous impact on our addiction.

Then there are individual life experiences. How has our life been shaped so far?

So, **brain circuits, genetics, individual life experiences, and environment** are the ingredients that come together to form a long-term medical disease, which is treatable. Research shows that treating addiction is equally as successful as treating other chronic disorders, like diabetes.

What are the different types of addictions that exist?

There are mostly two types: substance addiction and process addiction.

Substance addiction means we are addicted to a chemical, and the

most common is alcohol. There are other addictions like marijuana, cocaine, heroin, opiates. Then there are prescription drugs, like benzodiazepines, or alprazolam. There are also hallucinogens and dissociatives, like LSD, ketamine, and inhalants.

There are various forms of substance addictions, because there are so many substances available. The brain becomes dependent on a particular chemical.

There is also process addiction, which is dependency on some form of act or thinking pattern. For example, gambling and shopping can be addictions. It's for good reason that Amazon is successful, because shopping is one of the most common addictions. Then we have Internet addiction. On the Internet, we have pornography addiction and sex addiction. We have other co-dependency issues, and eating can also be an addiction. Any form of activity can become an addiction, if it's spiraling out of control and leading to negative consequences in life.

For example, knowing that alcohol damages your liver and has an impact on your physical health, will you still drink? It could have an impact on your performance at work. You lose your job due to addiction, yet you're still drinking. Your relationships are affected but you are still doing it. So, despite the negative consequences, your

addiction is persisting. You have legal problems, financial problems, but you are still doing it. When it becomes uncontrollable, despite the negative consequences you continue, then it is an addiction.

What are some factors that predispose a person to addiction?

Sometimes addiction serves as an escape from the uncomfortable feeling we are having. It's easier to just go ahead and look at the mobile or drink a glass of alcohol.

Eventually, over time, we develop a tolerance toward drugs and alcohol the more we consume them. Initially, one glass of alcohol would give us pleasure. Eventually, we would have to drink 10 glasses to get the same pleasure. The tolerance builds up. With time, the pleasure goes away and misery starts.

Then there are co-dependency issues. Relationships are normal, but when dependency affects life performance it also can be an addiction.

Coming to the factors that predispose us, they could be genetic, family, or our lack of ability to cope. Initially we find it pleasurable, and there is a reward pathway in the brain that whenever we find pleasure we



want to do it again. Nature has put those reward pathways there for a reason, giving us pleasurable stimuli for certain things. For example, if we did not have any pleasure in eating, we would not eat, and we would suffer from nutritional deficiencies. If we win something, we feel pleasure. We feel like doing more hard work because there are outcomes and we get pleasure from the outcomes. So nature has its way of advancing us and improving our life. But if we are too much involved in work, for example, it can be an addiction.

What does recovery from addiction look like? What does it entail when a person has to go through rehab or treatment?

Treatment options are many. Rehab is when we are admitted to an in-patient facility, where there's detox followed by learning. Detox is done under supervision, because detox from some substances, like alcohol and benzodiazepines, can

be life-threatening. Other detoxes may not be life-threatening, but they are very uncomfortable, and taking medications from a professional during that time can make it easier, tolerable and safe. Detox is the first step.

The second step is learning about addiction, learning about self, and learning about coping skills. I would say there are two ways of approaching this. The first is within, where we are learning about our own psychiatric disorders, treating them, and removing the underlying factors, such as access to the drugs and alcohol, and stimulus triggers, so that we can get away from them. We learn how to say no, and about the underlying emotional states that predispose us to addiction. Then we learn to cope with that. We have to remove those factors and learn about our inside environment and triggers, and work on them.

The second thing is action, and the level of action we take. Some examples are the 12-step meetings, going to peer support groups, sober houses, and ongoing community programs that helps us stay motivated and sober.

So, there is inside work and outside work on the path to recovery. As professionals, we use various tools such as individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy circles,

psycho drama, Rapid Eye Movement Treatment (EMDR), neurofeedback, medication, and then meditation after some time. All these tools are utilized. More and more research is available on how to use what tool for which person. There is no one formula for every person with addiction – we have to choose what is best for them. The good news is there are a lot of tools available, and as the research is growing they are becoming more and more effective. The primary step is to recognize the addiction and to seek help.

We should all have empathy and compassion toward each other, because it's all about imbalance. We all have been through some form of imbalance, and if we understand that, then we can have compassion and empathy for each other.

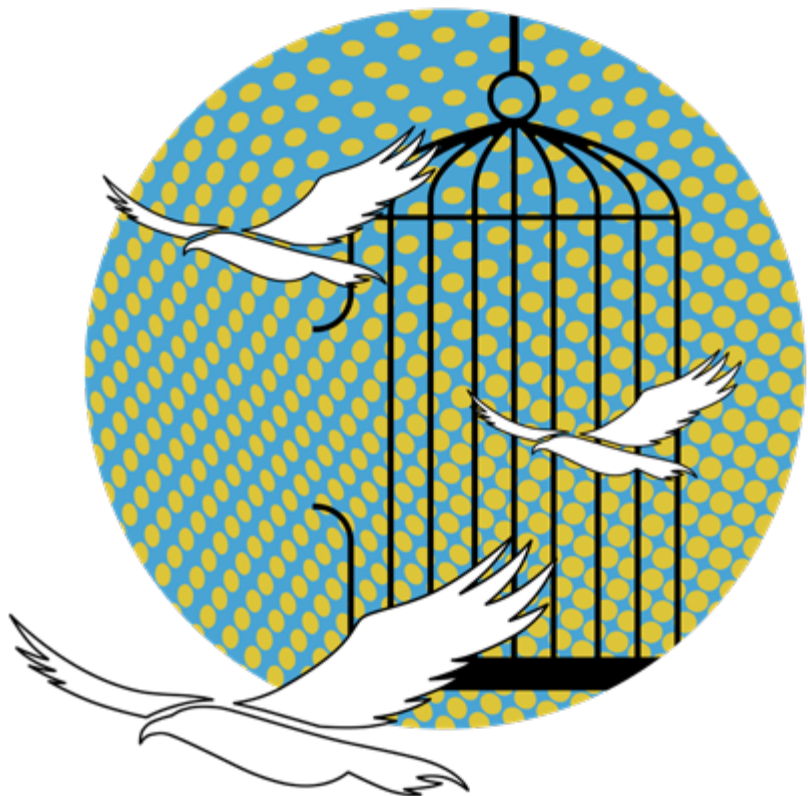
Misconceptions and myths people have about addiction

The most common and harmful misconception about addiction is that it's a moral defect, or a character defect, or a lack of willpower. I don't know who's spreading that misconception, but it's so wrong. Addiction is a medical disease and it's very common. We should all have empathy and compassion toward each other, because it's all about

imbalance. We all have been through some form of imbalance, and if we understand that, then we can have compassion and empathy for each other. That's the first step toward improvement. It's a disease and it's a spectrum. We all fall somewhere along that spectrum.

The second thing is that it's treatable. Efforts do bring results. The thought that it's not treatable puts a block to recovery, to wellness, to our betterment.

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Photography by HEARTFULNESS MEDIA TEAM

The Still Small Voice Within

ALANDA GREENE shares her perspective on how we can find our true purpose and vocation in the world, by serving ourselves and our communities.

Our world is indeed in dire straits, and we are familiar now with the litany of crises imperiling our earth. The miraculous balance and harmony of systems of water, air and creatures are severely threatened. All of this is exacerbated by social tensions of hatred, violence, racism, poverty, and war.

The miracle of this planet can feel overlooked. We dwell here with such an improbably wondrous constellation of events that has brought about the unfolding and manifestation of the great mystery of life on Earth.

Many of us do recognize both the miracle and the crisis, feeling a sense of overwhelm, despair, and hopelessness; wanting to take action to heal and stop the ongoing harm and destruction of our shared home; not clear which path, which action, which choices will assist. In such a state, questions emerge:

What can I do with my life to help this world? Where can guidance be found? What is right action? How can I best use my energy and resources to be of use and a force for good?

We live with incredible access to information, opinions, advice, and knowledge, and there is a plethora of answers to such heartfelt questioning. We find abundant offerings served on platters claiming truth, certainty, and conviction – polarized views and contradictory stances. This also contributes to uncertainty and paralysis for the genuine seeker desiring to find a path with heart that will be of service.

At such a time, relaxation, rest, finding joy in beauty and in simple natural pleasures can feel self-indulgent or escapist. Pursuing calm and peace through meditation, yoga, quiet interaction in nature is essential given the stress and uncertainty of our times. It is not just about finding personal respite from the situation. It is much more.

The sense of urgency that makes time for personal quiet and restoration feel like a selfish choice is perhaps behind this story.

A Buddhist teacher asked his student who had come for an interview, “Have you been able to meditate for an hour a day as was instructed in our last visit?”



Photography by ADOBE STOCK/MAKIENI

The student explained that it was not possible, since he had so many responsibilities with work, family, and community: “Usually I can manage half an hour.”

The teacher replied, “In that case, I now instruct you to meditate for two hours a day.”

In times of pressure and busy-ness, stress and uncertainty, it is in quiet and peaceful situations that access to inner guidance, direction, and knowing can be accessed. When the tumult of emotion and the restlessness of thoughts settles, then the “still small voice within” emerges. Listening deepens. Innate wisdom speaks. Our innate wisdom is our surest guide to what action, what path is required. Unless we can experience balance, harmony, and peace within, how will we find it elsewhere?

In the quiet within, inner guidance that directs appropriate personal response is revealed. The cultivation of peace within is a skill that benefits the health of our own selves and that of the global community. We can then determine the best path to offer our own gifts, skills, talents, and abilities. As Howard Thurman said, “In the stillness of the quiet, if we listen, we can hear the whisper of the heart giving strength to weakness, courage to fear, hope to despair.” The whisper of the heart becomes a source of wisdom to counter the conditions of confusion, uncertainty, and stress of these times.

Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism, taught, “The Tao is called the Great Mother, empty yet inexhaustible. It gives birth to infinite worlds. It is always present within you. You can use it any way you want.” The collective gifts of humanity contain the many paths that surely can change the course

When the tumult of emotion and
the restlessness of thoughts settles,
then the “still small voice within” emerges.
Listening deepens. Innate wisdom speaks.

of our current trajectory. There is a need and a calling for the artists, the musicians, the business people, the healers, the gardeners, the tenders of children and animals and wild spaces, the teachers, the contemplatives, the cooks, and the trades. To discover which path uses the gifts of a particular individual requires the deep listening of the heart, by that person.

“Our world needs wisdom and insight,” said Thich Nhat Hahn. “You are capable of sharing your insight so that you can wake up your nation, your people. And if your nation, your people, are awake,

then your government will have to act according to the insight of the people.” Accessing our insight awakens knowledge of a genuine path of service, chosen with the confidence of its effectiveness and worth.

In the midst of all the need that surrounds us, perhaps the most important is to give time to go within, to allow your own wisdom to speak and guide you, to restore your peaceful being and joy. Rather than being self-serving or indulgent, claiming and sharing beauty, joy, and care could be the highest service we can offer.







inspiration

The fruit of silence is prayer,
the fruit of prayer is faith,
the fruit of faith is love,
the fruit of love is service, and
the fruit of service is peace.

MOTHER TERESA

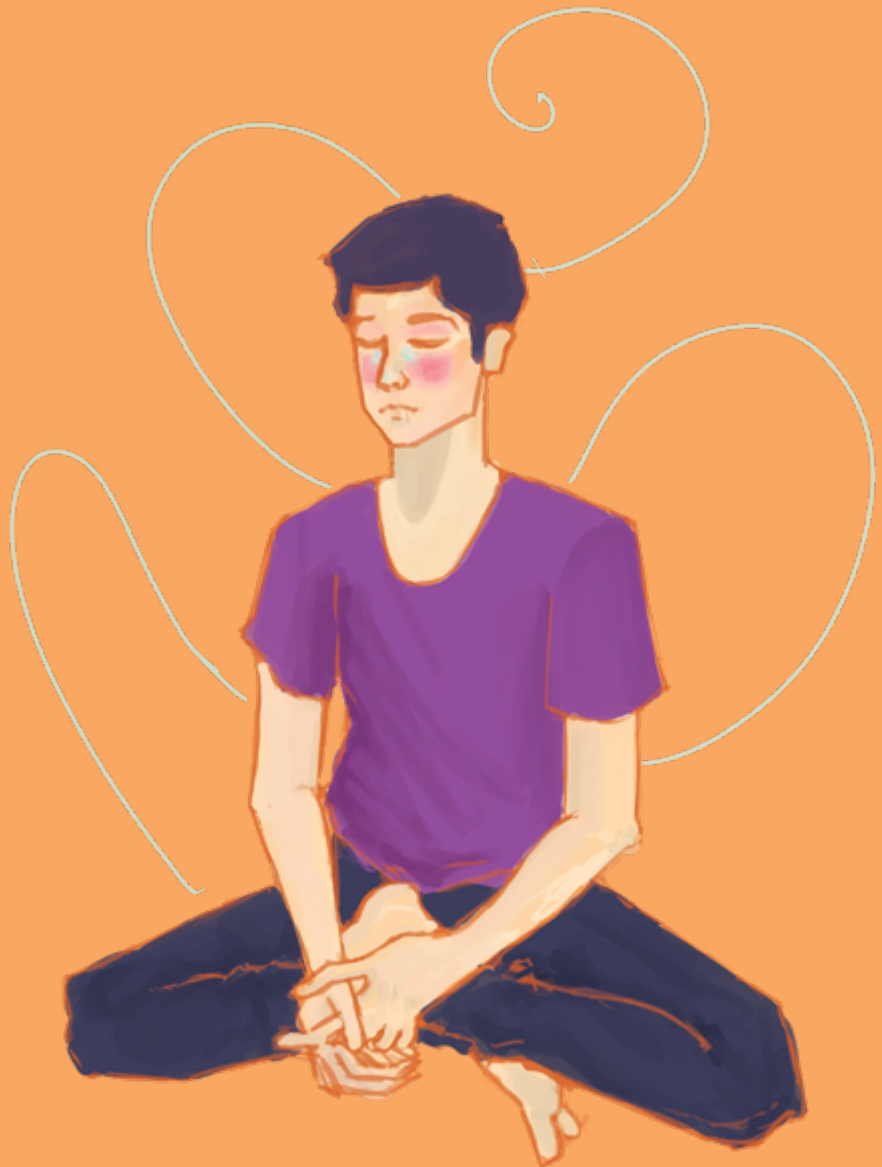
Our Noble Youth

This article is an excerpt from **DAAJI's** upcoming book, *The Wisdom Bridge: Nine Principles to Live a Life that Echoes in the Heart of Your Loved Ones*. It is being published by Penguin India, and will be released later this month.

If we plant a seed, it cannot jump thirty years and become a fruit-yielding tree. It must go through the stages one by one to reach maturity, and that is the process of growth. So, it's inevitable that a tree's life begins with a seed, then a sapling, then a young tree, then a mature fruit-bearing tree.

In our life, youth is the journey toward maturity. It is a time of great promise and potential. When I spend time with young people, it gives me a window into their buoyant hearts. When I hear their problems, which some time ago were my problems too, it deepens our kinship. When I listen to their ideas, I feel energized. When I see them drowned in meditation, I witness a new humanity awakening. These young adults are the change agents in our world.

As parents, elders, and teachers, it's our duty to prepare children for young adulthood by laying strong moral and emotional foundations. From an early age, if we introduce good habits, then when they



grow up they will have a well-tuned inner GPS guiding them. Throughout history, whenever young people were supported by the wisdom of elders, they went on to change the world in amazing ways.

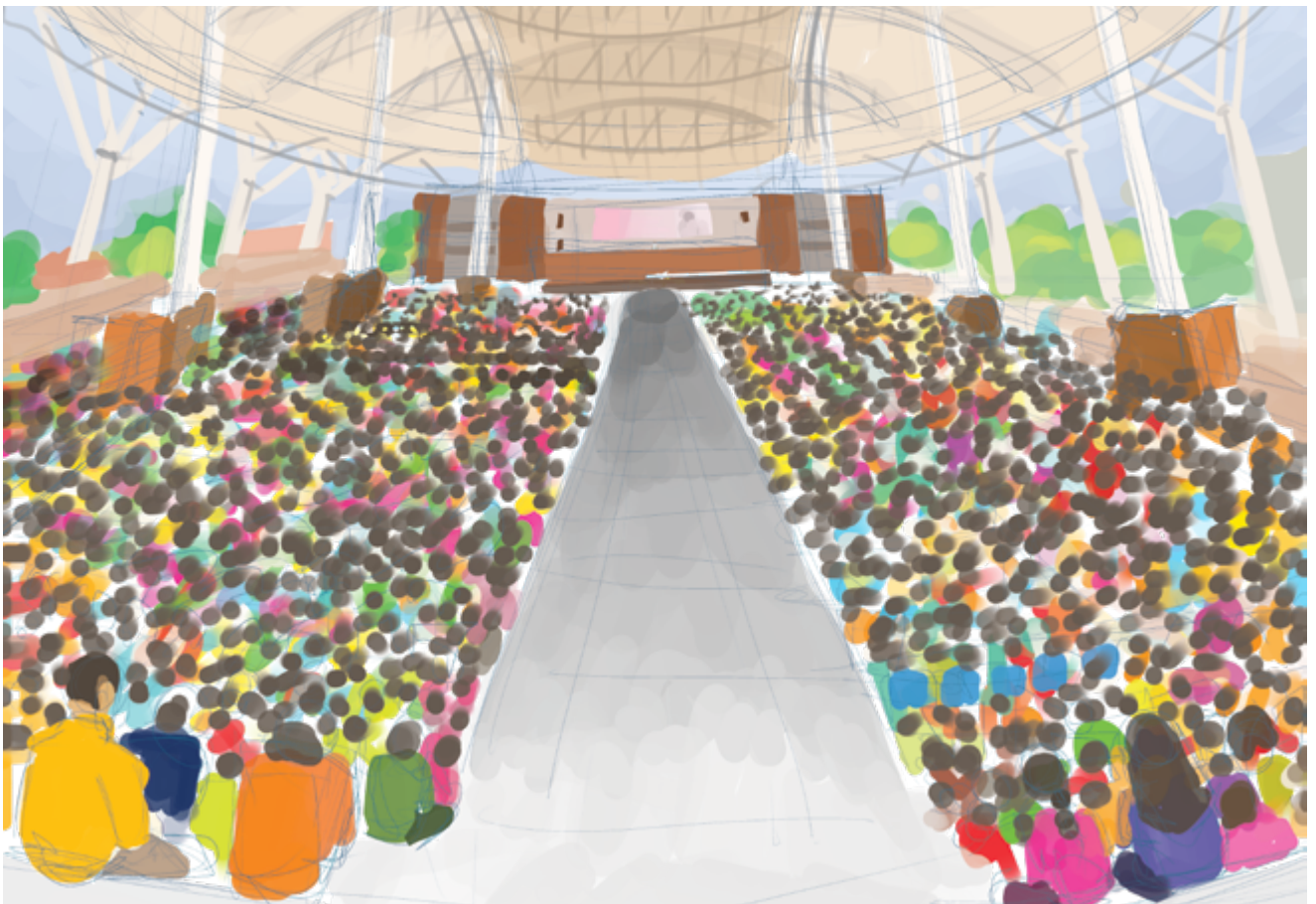
But supporting them is not an easy task. Their age is a heady mix of promise, inquisitiveness, defiance, and energy. Saying “This is how we do it” won’t work, because they push back on authority. Talking down to them or pandering to them doesn’t work. We have to meet as equals. Of course, it takes

patience, empathy, authenticity, and a good bit of humor to connect.

Once a group of 20-year-olds came to visit me at our meditation center in Kanha, India. Kanha is a sanctuary of peace, chiseled out of the arid lands of igneous rock and quartz of the Deccan plateau. Today, Kanha is home to thousands of trees that line the walkways leading to the world’s largest meditation hall. Picture this: A hundred thousand people from around the world meditating for the collective purpose of unity

and peace. Kanha is the Garden of Eden of meditation.

At the time these 20-year-olds visited, the meditation hall was still being built. Several projects were underway and two thousand people were working every day at the site. The youngsters were here for volunteer work. When you sign up as a volunteer, whether you are laying bricks, planting trees, pulling cables, or sweeping floors, your heart becomes more open, aligns with the vision, and you care for what is being done. The work ethic and habits that you develop



INSPIRATION

also serve you well in all aspects of your life.

I gave them a fact-finding mission. I asked them to observe the work and then report back to me. When we got together a few days later, they pulled out a list, almost two pages long. They had identified problems related to shift hours, waste management, landscaping, worker safety, quality of materials, and many other things.

Next, I gave them a couple of days to brainstorm solutions and present their ideas to the project team at Kanha. I also told them that I wouldn't be attending that meeting. I preferred that they had a free-range discussion, and asked one of my associates to listen in. My associate told me that the

meeting started well but quickly went off the rails.

Here's what happened that day. When the young volunteers presented their findings, the project team felt that they were calling their baby ugly. They also felt that the suggestions were half-baked and lacked proper context. The project team became defensive, and the young volunteers became aggressive. In the heat of the moment, neither team was mindful of the goal, which was how to make Kanha better.

I knew this would happen. Over the years, I have seen how clashing egos squash enthusiasm. I wanted the project team to learn how to process feedback. I wanted them

to grasp the proverbial wisdom of separating the wheat from the chaff. But, when emotions run high, we end up collecting chaff from the wheat. I also wanted the youngsters to learn how to offer feedback in a constructive way.

A few days later, when both teams had cooled off, I called them over to my place. I used my weapon of choice, which hasn't failed me to date. Warm masala chai and some finger-licking Gujarati savories. The instant these weapons are fired even the mightiest meekly surrender to the onslaught of sips and dips. Soon the teams started chatting again. This time around, I asked them to keep the big picture in mind, and having said that, I left for a walk.

I was later told that the conversation went well. This time, the youngsters understood the project team's viewpoint. They had a better appreciation of the sleepless nights and grueling work involved. The project team, for their part, appreciated the energy of the youngsters. They understood that not only were they offering solutions, they would also work on implementing them. The meeting ended with a feeling of kinship and solidarity.

There is an old engineer's lament, "Between seeing the glass half full or half empty there is also the possibility of the glass being



The biggest strength of youth is energy. Their energy is creative. There is no turning off the fire. There is no hibernating through this phase of life. When youthful energies are channeled in the right direction, such energy is creative energy.



designed for twice the capacity.” When the energy of youth is supported by wisdom, new perspectives emerge. Young people are not wild horses to be tamed. They need to be inspired and enabled as a force for good.

The biggest strength of youth is energy. Their energy is creative. There is no turning off the fire. There is no hibernating through this phase of life. When youthful

energies are channeled in the right direction, such energy is creative energy. The energy of youth is designed for a period of vigorous activity with aspiration. What is the aspiration that drives them? Can it be how to become gentle, how to become loving, and how to become wise?

As an elder, I feel a responsibility to impart wisdom and surround our youth with wise people. Their

wisdom will help today’s young people achieve their full potential and bring positive change in their families and communities.

Illustrations by PRAMITI RAMCHANDRA

inform, inspire, engage

JEREMY GILLEY is the founder of Peace One Day. Because of his efforts, September 21 is an annual day of global ceasefire and non-violence. 22 years on, Jeremy is even more passionate about bringing peace to the world, despite the current uncertainty and unrest. Here he speaks to **ELIZABETH DENLEY** about taking Peace One Day to the next level.



Q: Hi Jeremy, it's good to connect again. Peace One Day has built so much awareness over the past two decades about peace and the need for ceasefires. So what next? Where are we heading with all this?

Well, there are two things. First, where are we heading as a global community, and second, what kind of impact are the Peace One Day campaigns having?

Our Global Situation

Where we're heading as a global community is obviously of serious concern. It's extremely worrying, frightening, and tragic. There are really no words to describe the way we are operating at this particular point.

We admitted a while ago, as people like Paul Polman and Mary Robinson said, that this decade is incredibly crucial. We needed to make the right decisions in relation to humanity's survival, and now everything we're doing is the opposite of what we should be doing. We're seeing an increase in violence between countries and in our communities. The way in which we're treating resources ... I'm upset and angry about the whole thing.



Photography by ADOBE STOCK/DISOBEYART

When you look at the evolution of humans, should I be that surprised? We can have an intellectual conversation about how everything's got to change, but the truth is, can we actually change the DNA of a human being to be capable of protecting anything beyond itself? I think history probably proves the answer to that question.

If we look at some of our great achievements, there's some beautiful architecture (dependent on the resources that we used to build it), amazing

music, beautiful art, and amazing poetry, etc. There are also some very complex weapons. There are examples of heinous destruction. That is what we are. Look at the evolution of the human species in relation to destroying each other, and destroying what gives us life. That is the result.

So, we can have a nice conversation about beautiful things and spirituality, but it's really niche when I look at what we've done, who we truly are, the manifestation of our actions. Do we have the ability to do

something different? Have we only *just* realized that we have to behave differently? Of course not. We've known for ages that we needed to behave differently. And have we been capable of behaving differently? The answer is no.

That's the reality. Will there be a shift in consciousness? Unlikely. What will life be like beyond 250 years, if indeed it exists? Unpleasant, to say the least. Many would say we're in the final chapter. We were told by the great contemporary



Photography by MILTIADIS FRAGKIDIS

thinkers of our time that this is the decade for fundamental change and we have failed!

And we haven't even talked about the 4 billion people who are really hungry, and about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. "Sorry, I want to feed my kids. You want to talk about 17 goals with me?" That's where we are, that's who we are, and who we are is what we've manifested.

So what's the point of getting up? Well, there is a point. I've

got a little girl, and I need to take care of her, and I need to do everything I can to protect her future as best I can, so that's exactly what I'm going to do. And then my daughter will have children, and my daughter's children are really going to be in the heart of the fire.

Therefore, I'm going to get up and dig deep every day. And I'm going to work my absolute socks off, to do three things that are crucial to humanity's survival. It's not just me, there

are thousands of people doing it. We need to create narratives that are constructive, with just three words: *inform*, *inspire*, *engage*. Not inform and freak someone out! There's no point in pretending this whole thing is okay, but that doesn't make any difference to the way I'm going to operate on a daily basis. In fact, it fuels my desire to work even harder.

I think we've got to look back at history, whether it's the slave trade, women having the vote, or

We can make a difference – all of us trying to make a contribution, individually, collectively, doing extraordinary things – and science and technology will kick in as well. It's a fascinating situation!

the incredible LGBT+ community, and the amazing breakthroughs that we see in all sorts of diverse, inclusive, just, and equal ways. They were people on the periphery who were shouting and screaming, being creative and constructive, and informing, inspiring and engaging, and who eventually made the status quo. Well, guess what? Individuals on the outskirts who are marginalized, who aren't the mainstream, will be the status quo! And that's a beautiful, exciting, inspiring point; that's how history unfolds.

And technology and science are going to be fundamental to our human fight for survival. We can make a difference – all of us trying to make a contribution, individually, collectively, doing extraordinary things – and science and technology will kick in as well. It's a fascinating situation!

The Impact of Peace One Day

And the impact of Peace One Day? Well, it's 22 years, 138 countries. The International Day of Peace is September 21, a day of ceasefire, of nonviolence, unanimously adopted by every government in the world. It has also been passed through the US Congress as the Day of Peace. That was a lot of hard work by Kofi Annan and the incredible men and women of the United Nations, and others, including corporations, actors and singers, and civil society. The day is manifested; that's my starting point.

We saw what happened in Afghanistan with a ceasefire – children were vaccinated and there was a 70% reduction in violence, so we saw improvement in the

most complex place in the world. A cynic would say that one day of peace is only symbolic and meaningless, but they're wrong; this mountain is climbable. You can only say it's not climbable if you have a fear of climbing it yourself. Two billion people are aware and more people are thinking about peace than on any other day of the year – that is a great thing. As a consequence of that collective thought there is a behavioral change. September 21 is the most peaceful day of the year, so we know the impact is there.

We're moving into the next chapter, becoming like a "Netflix for Good." We do 4 shows a year – for the elimination of racial discrimination, for climate action, the world's Day of Peace, and Space Transformers. That's a lot of inspiring and engaging



Photography by ETONASTENKA

narrative. Next year, we will do 12 shows, the 4 big ones and one every other month – 90-minute specials around issues like poverty, terrorism, education, marking key dates in every month. As a consequence, you'll see content creation quadrupling, amplifying, and that means more engagement and more narrative created by us to inform, inspire, and engage globally.

Over the next five years or so, I would like to see POD become a destination, where you go to see programming around peace, sustainability, climate justice, equality, diversity, collaboration, cooperation, innovation, spirituality, etc. I'm very excited about the future. We're fired up.

We're surviving, and it's the yin and the yang, isn't it, the dark and the light. I know darkness. Having known darkness is what allows

me to see the light, find the light. So, it's the first part of the answer to your question about really examining what we've actually manifested, what our evolution is manifesting. Darkness is actually what creates and ignites a passion and a desire to do something constructive.

Q: And whenever evolution happens, it comes in quantum leaps. So, there's always the possibility, that something's

going to leap out of the stratosphere and go somewhere else. And we never know when that's going to happen. If we don't do anything, it's not going to happen. If we do something, it may or may not happen, but there's a chance it will.

So, what's happening on September 21?

We are creating an experience on September 21. People can get information by watching any of the social media channels, including Peace One Day, Jeremy Gilley, and International Day of Peace. We're going live from London and New York this year on World Peace Day. We will have contributions from unbelievable individuals from the world of music and performance art, thought leaders, panel discussions, interviews, and we'll broadcast live to various locations around the world.

We'll be telling the stories of remarkable women and men who are working daily to save humanity. And I hope that informs and inspires and engages others to do the same. If you don't know about Peace Day, and you come across that work, it will hopefully inform, inspire, and engage you to action. If you know it's going to be Peace Day, I hope you reconcile your differences, pull your family

If you know it's going to be Peace Day, I hope you reconcile your differences, pull your family together in a moment of unity, and with that unity comes hope and strength.

together in a moment of unity, and with that unity comes hope and strength. By working together, we can have peace one day, in our families, in our communities, in our places of work, in our places of worship, and in our schools and universities.

If we want to live in a peaceful world, and we know the day of peace is September 21, but we don't do anything ourselves, then don't question government leaders. That's the whole point, isn't it? If we want to live in a more peaceful and sustainable world that protects our children's children, we are all going to have to play along.

So, to those who know about September 21, I hope you have a beautiful day. You don't need to organize the biggest event that's ever happened, you just need to reach out to your family, your friends, your loved ones, and your work colleagues, or just strengthen those relationships and the sense of commitment that, "Let's do some real good here." Follow us on social media and tell us what you're doing. For those who don't know, I hope you watch the show and find out more.

Q: Thank you. That's inspiring. Are you still as visionary and inspired as you were 22 years ago?

INSPIRATION

I think I'm probably scarred. I've got a lot of wounds, but those wounds are interesting. And some of the darkness that I've experienced is like a climber who falls down halfway, after taking three years to get to that point, and now they've got to go another couple of years. You can look at it two ways: I've fallen down and I'm never going to make it; or I've fallen down and hurt myself, but I've got to get up and work another couple of years to get to the top of that mountain.

To those who helped manifest darkness in the world, instead of wanting revenge, be grateful to them and thank them for the experience they've given you. It's making you who you are, and there's a lot in that. If you can look at life that way, it's liberating. It actually does fuel passion. Turn around what's dark, what brings you down, and say, life is a series of chapters, life is things that you just have to learn and tools to equip yourself with. It's that mental approach where you see the glass half full rather than the glass half empty.

How am I feeling? Pretty scarred but passionate, probably more passionate. I've got more energy now, after 22 years on the road, than I had at the beginning. I have equipped myself with skills that I never had before. That gives me the ability to think really big, paint

any picture, dream of anything, just go for it. That's really exciting!

Also, people take you more seriously the older you get. Years ago, I remember looking at big producers like Kevin Wall, and now I think to myself, "Wow, you've done a lot of producing, Jeremy." I'm not suggesting I'm anywhere near Kevin, but life is quite beautiful in that way. It enriches you and rewards you, and the rewards come as a consequence of your ability to know and see things as achievable. I feel great, I feel ready, I feel energized, I'm up for another five years of really interesting work.

Q: Peace be with you, it's fantastic talking to you.

I love speaking with you and am always really grateful for all the amazing work that you are all doing, it's incredible. We've just got to keep going.

ED: At Heartfulness, we're doing a lot of environmental work now, with forest planting of rare and endangered species – across India, millions of trees. And water projects with governments to re-irrigate. I agree with you, the SDGs aren't going to happen unless we make them happen.

The SDGs are wonderful signposts, wonderful pieces of art. They have a very important role

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Photography by MICHEILE DOT COM

to remind us of the mountains we need to continuously climb. The key with having a finite period of time is that we can perceive it as a failure when we don't achieve them within the 15-year window. But the truth is, they've already been a success in relation to those who have seen them, which of course, is limited. I've drawn a lot from

them personally. I love thinking about them. Those who have the privilege to be able to look at them and talk about them, which is very few, have a crucial role. If you can look at them, you can probably eat. So, good on the teams that have been working tirelessly, like the SDG Action Campaign. Brilliant, brilliant work.

Q: Well, thank you so much, and all the best for September 21.

JG: Have a wonderful Peace Day. It's lovely to see you.

Q: You too. All the best.



workplace



Work, look for peace and
calm in work;
you will find it nowhere else.

DMITRI MENDELEEV

Illustrations by HURCA



The 4 Phases of *Community*

EMILIE MOGENSEN attended STEVE MACADAM's module as part of *The Inner MBA*, and she is deeply inspired by his way of building authentic communities. Steve is an MBA from Harvard, a Baker Scholar, and currently an independent director for Louisiana-Pacific Corporation and Valvoline Inc. In part 2 of the series, they explore the 4 phases of building authentic communities.

“The next Buddha may take the form of a community – a community practicing understanding and loving kindness, a community practicing mindful living.”

—*Thich Nhat Hanh*

We are exploring Steve Macadam’s model on how to build authentic communities. The model is simple and based on 4 phases:

Phase 1, the pseudo community

Phase 2, the chaos community

Phase 3, the emptying phase

Phase 4, the authentic community

Phase 1, the pseudo community, is artificial, not real. Steve explains that this phase is often where most companies and organizations are stuck for long periods and some

people seem to be okay there. But the bottom line is that the community can thrive much better, and some people break away from those communities that don’t offer space for authenticity.

This leads us to Phase 2, the chaos community, where a lot of people leave and some stay back, and often insist rather strongly on maintaining things “as they have always been.” We see this a lot in the world today, where the “great resignation” is a hardcore reality for many companies. People are simply no longer willing to put their jobs and positions above their personal well-being. I believe this is an unavoidable result of decades, even centuries, of the individual trying to fit in at any cost.

This fitting in often comes from a very strong need to feel a part of the group and not to stand alone, which is a very sweet and innocent quality of the human heart – the need to be with fellow beings and to connect. But the question to ask is: do we really connect? And do we really thrive if we constantly value the profit of the company, the peace of the room, over our inner most truthful need of being allowed to feel okay just as we are?

I am writing this article with a funny sense of insecurity, as I know the *Heartfulness Magazine* is a multicultural magazine, with readers from around the world, with different backgrounds, cultures, and religious beliefs. I respect this and want to honor everyone’s feelings. Some cultures



believe strongly in putting the group's needs over the individual, which a part of me does as well.

So why am I so drawn to Steve's model? Because another part of me is truly thirsty to step into a new world and a new expression of myself: of being able to hold space for others, and not feel threatened nor hurt when someone holds a very different opinion than me.

It seems to be part of an evolutionary plan that we are in the midst of a paradigm shift. The fact that we have seen numerous

communities breaking up, families breaking up, friendships breaking up, companies breaking up, shows me something is in deep transformation in our societal structures. We are in the middle of a collective "community of chaos," phase 2.

We travel through Phase 3, the emptying phase, to move from chaos to Phase 4, the authentic community. Phase 3 is where Steve allows all the workers to express themselves, through listening to fairy tales and through mindfulness exercises.

A sense of equality must be present, so everyone can express their feelings and everyone can practice holding space for one another.

He emphasizes how important it is that the CEO, the leader, faces the people within a circle, sitting on a chair at the same height as the others in the group. A sense of equality must be present, so everyone can express their feelings and everyone can practice holding space for one another.

This means to leave the thinking part of consciousness, and truly listen with the heart and the entire body. The heart holds our compassionate qualities, while our body is the container of a lot of hidden trauma. We tend to want to bypass the unpleasant feelings, as we don't like to feel uncomfortable.

This is where “emotional intelligence” comes into the picture. Demonstrating emotional intelligence is actually very simple. It is the ability to stay present in our own and other people's emotions and feelings. It is not about understanding them, and certainly not about giving advice. It is about being able to hold a certain tune of someone's instrument, even though we might prefer to play on other tunes. It requires the confidence to be brave enough to allow the unpleasant stream of consciousness to move through the energy body, without holding onto it or pushing it away. It's an exercise in letting energy move through the physical body

and the energy body, and letting it go when it's ready to pass.

I asked Steve to elaborate on the importance of strong and visible leadership in the emptying phase. He shares that it is crucial that everyone leads themselves from within, and nobody feels they are “being watched” by someone in power.

I ask a bit further, wanting him to share some insights about how important it must be to have very defined frameworks around this in a community. It is very sweet how Steve is really not into top down leadership, as one could imagine a CEO in a publicly traded US company could be. He emphasizes the importance of a free and open environment, where everyone can express their truth. However, he ends up agreeing with me that a skillful leader is required to facilitate these community meetings, where everyone can empty their inner feelings and share their truths.

He shares how we can benefit from being in a large circle, together, then some breakout sessions can take place. This is not something new in my own communities, and I have often felt it to be rather boring. Again, my impatient entrepreneur mentality! Steve shares with me that the typical entrepreneur is often

It requires the confidence to be brave enough to allow the unpleasant stream of consciousness to move through the energy body, without holding onto it or pushing it away. It's an exercise in letting energy move through the physical body and the energy body, and letting it go when it's ready to pass.

Most human beings are people with strong intentions for a better world, for compassion and peace. And what a human heart needs most is to feel allowed and contained in whatever process it is going through.

the person who breaks out from communities. I resonate with that. Some sort of “don’t care, move on” thought pattern in my head.

A part of me is sad about this, because I truly wish to be a part of authentic communities, not just doing things my way. I feel split into these two sides. One is afraid to lose my go-getter power if I have to succumb to a group. It truly is faster to get things done on my own. Another part of me wants to be part of a group.

I ask Steve how to deal with this, and his answer makes so much sense. “This is exactly what you have to share in the group,” he says. I feel a strong sense of healing when these two rather different personalities in me meet and shake hands.

Back to the emptying phase, our community meeting, and sharing in small groups. What struck me with Steve’s model is that he guides us to come back after the breakout session and share together in a slightly different way than I am used to. What we share in the plenum is not what we discussed, but how did it make us feel to share in the breakout session? What struck us? How did we feel sharing? What were we good at sharing? This is brilliant in my eyes! Because most human beings (at least the

ones reading this magazine) are people with strong intentions for a better world, for compassion and peace. And what a human heart needs most is to feel allowed and contained in whatever process it is going through.

And who really wants to blame others? Not many! But sometimes we can’t stop blaming a certain person, a leader or a group, unless we are allowed to be acknowledged for the pain we have felt in the pseudo phase. The very fact that we share how sharing made us feel creates an authentic community, because we start showing more interest in how we feel, instead of what we think and say.

The key takeaways from Steve’s model:

To move from pseudo community to authentic community, each of us must demonstrate strong inner leadership.

People in decision-making positions must practice asking what he calls “powerful questions.” Here are some examples:
 Why are you not feeling safe in this community?
 Why do you not like the way things are?
 What is your contribution to the very thing you address?
 What is your contribution as a leader?

A true leader is someone who cares about having a positive impact on others, through role modeling rather than teaching or giving advice.



Steve is not a top down leader, which truly makes me want to follow him and ask him for advice. He emphasizes that a true leader is someone who cares about having a positive impact on others, through role modeling rather than teaching or giving advice.

Once the emptying phase is processed in a compassionate way, facilitated by leaders who are able to hold their vision and allow space for everyone to unfold their inner leader, the authentic community emerges from deep within everyone. It offers deep meaningful relationships, a sense of belonging, and loyalty to the respective organization or company.

Thank you Steve for this wonderful opportunity to explore your experimental ways and to learn from you.

Illustrations by ALONA SAVCHUK

What makes an Organization Healthy?

DR. ICHAK ADIZES addresses organizational health, effectiveness, and efficiency, using the idea of systems and subsystems. He then explores how the various subsystems can work together to fulfill the purpose of the organization.

What makes an organization healthy? What is a healthy organization, a healthy system? It has to be effective and efficient, in the short and the long run. Like a human body, every part of the body has to be effective. The kidneys have to do their job, the blood has to do its job, the brain has to do its job, the heart has to do its job, and the lungs have to do its job. It's the same thing for a company.

All functions must be effective to produce the results for which they exist. The system in its totality, with all its subsystems, has to be effective and efficient. No waste of energy, because if you waste energy internally, since energy is fixed, there will be less energy to deal with external purposes for which you exist. If you are sick, what happens? You have no energy. You have no energy to deal with the world, that is why you tell people, "Please leave me alone. Come tomorrow. I am too exhausted today. I am sick today." When you are sick all the energy is dedicated to dealing with the inefficiency of the system. So, the organization has to be effective and efficient in the short and in the long run.

I discovered many years ago that there are four roles, or you can call them vitamins, organizational

vitamins, that are necessary for the system to be effective and efficient in the short and in the long run, and in order to be healthy. And those roles have to work in unison.

Every system is a subsystem of a larger system. Everything is a subsystem of everything else. There's a grand subsystem, the universe, and we are all subsystems of that, and everything is a subsystem of something else until you get to the human being, and the human being is also a system. You have kidneys, and a bladder, and lungs, and a brain, and a heart as well, I hope. Each has a purpose to fulfill for the whole system.

In an organization, each subsystem has its clients that the teams dedicate themselves to in order for the total system to be effective.

So, for whom do you exist? For whom does the subsystem exist? To satisfy its client needs. Many people ask: Who am I? The question has been addressed in philosophy, psychology, and even religion. Don't ask: Who am I? Ask: For whom am I?

Tell me what you are dedicated to and I will tell you who you are.



Photography by ADOBE STOCK/ LUSTRE

If I fulfilled the purpose of being a father, I'm a father. If I fulfill the purpose of being a teacher, I'm a teacher. Tell me the purpose for which you exist and if you satisfy that need I will tell you who you are. But in order to do that, you have to identify the clients. "For whom am I?" has to be answered before you can answer, "Who am I?" For whom do you exist? Who are those clients? If your kids need you, and you fulfill the needs of parenting, you are a parent.

Look at a hammer. Why is it a hammer? Because you use it to bang nails. But if you use it to hurt someone it is not a hammer; it becomes a weapon. So tell me what your client needs are, and what you satisfy, and I will tell you who you are. That's where we start, and from there on we look at efficiency and all the other variables.

Just thinking and feeling,
Dr. Ichak Kalderon Adizes

It is not “forgive and forget” as if nothing wrong had ever happened, but “forgive and go forward”: building on the mistakes of the past and the energy generated by reconciliation to create a new future.

ALAN PATON





relationships

Epigenetics and Love in
PARENTING



DR. KARISHMA STRETTON is a doctor and medical educator who has focused her attention on parenting. In part 2 of her interview with **ELIZABETH DENLEY**, she speaks about the psychological development of children, and the role of epigenetics and love.

Q: Can you talk about the psychological development of a child? It's not just at the physical, but also at the more subtle levels of consciousness and subconscious levels that we connect with our children. Are we calm and loving, stressed and anxious, or are we struggling?

You've read Bruce Lipton's work on how the subconscious mind is far more important in determining our behavior and responses to the world than the conscious mind, which is a thin film between the subconscious and the superconscious. What can we do as parents apart from bonding and meeting biological expectations? How do we move into healthy psychological development?

It's beautiful the way you're describing it, Elizabeth. The conscious and the subconscious mind and the different ways it comes out in the way we behave. Our physiology and psychology, even. The brain of the baby undergoes such rapid development in the first seven years of life. This period in a child's development is of enormous potential, but also requires great care as it represents a time of almost super-charged hardwiring of the brain. Those who have primary contact with the child in these early years are effectively engineering the mind of the child.

In the early years, the human brain undergoes a phenomenal rapid download. It is not only a download of skill sets, like how to physically survive in this

world, but also a program of beliefs – how to fit into society, where to fit into the scheme of things. In order to understand how this rapid programming takes place, it is best to think of the mind as the duality of the conscious and subconscious mind. The conscious mind is rational, and through it we exercise free will. The subconscious mind dwells below the level of consciousness, and together with the unconscious mind, is largely responsible for our beliefs, habits, and behaviors.

We really need to ask ourselves how our subconscious and unconscious minds are programmed, because what goes in there when we are young affects all aspects of life: our beliefs, our limitations, our physiology, and our health.



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If we look at the various stages of a child's development, different brainwave activity predominates at different stages:

From birth to 2: delta waves.

From 2 to 6: theta waves.

From 6 to 12: alpha waves.

From 12 onward: beta waves.

From birth to 2 years, with delta waves predominating, there is a state of deep relaxation. From two to six years, theta waves predominate, which can be described as a state of lighter sleep or just waking up. Hypnotherapists aim to get people into the delta or theta wave states because of their increased suggestibility. Children do not have a developed conscious mind, an analytical mind, to filter out all the input. We could say that children from birth until the age of six are almost in a hypnotic state, where there's a real hardwiring in their brains of the suggestions and behaviors of those around them as truths.

I first discovered this information on parenting when I was reading Bruce Lipton's *The Biology of Belief*. We are effectively programming the minds of our children. Even though this can be quite frightening, it's a wonderful empowering opportunity to program a positive mindset into our children. I enjoyed being with my children at bedtime, which I saw as a door into their

subconscious minds as they drifted off to sleep. I enjoyed expressing statements of love for them, and statements that would empower them with words of positivity, such as "you're strong," "you're healthy," "you're beautiful," "I'm so grateful to have you in my life," "you have incredible qualities that you can give to this world," "I'm so proud of who you are." It's an opportunity to create beautiful minds as these words are absorbed into their subconscious as truths. For me, that's how I put it into practice with my own children.

Q: Can you talk about how suggestibility and the use of positive affirmations can also affect us at the epigenetic level? For example, Bruce Lipton's study shows that stress affects the growth of the fetus during pregnancy. Can you speak about epigenetics, and how our role as parents affects children?

Epigenetics is a relatively new area of science that has helped us understand the delicate relationship between environmental influences and our genetic expression. In the past, genetic determinism was the predominant approach – the belief that our genetics are fixed from birth, but epigenetics has changed that understanding.

There's a really good analogy: If DNA is your unique song, the

Love needs to be abundant, unconditional, and never withdrawn. When we combine those with being present for our children, and surrounding ourselves with a community of supportive individuals, we have the vital ingredients for a rewarding parenting style.

epigenome is the audio engineer who changes the way the song is played – the volume, the quality, the adding or removing of certain instruments. In the same way, our genetics can be altered by our epigenome.

Our epigenetic markers are a set of instructions that sit on top of our DNA histones. Epigenetic markers are chemical tags that signal or influence whether or not the gene should compress or unravel to allow the cell to read the instructions on the DNA. Epigenetic instruction dictates which genes are switched on and off, so it is the link between our environmental influence and our health, personality, and even behavior.

You mentioned Lipton's example of stress on the fetus, and this is a perfect example of epigenetics in the context of children. Stress is such an important case to discuss because it is pervasive in today's society, and stress is translated into hormonal and chemical signals. Everyone's probably familiar with adrenaline. In the case of a pregnant woman, stress hormones and chemicals flood her bloodstream, then go through the placenta into the fetus. It is now well known that women who experience stress during pregnancy are at greater risk of pre-term birth. Their babies are

at a much greater risk of smaller birth weight, asthma, allergies, infectious diseases, etc. Also, through epigenetics, prenatal stress can actually be one of the most powerful influences on mental health in later life.

And epigenetics can actually work through generations. Ancestral changes can be passed through to the fetus, and also cause changes further down the line. We just cannot deny the incredible influence we have over our children's genetic expression. Even though it's daunting and terrifying, we can actually use this information to maximize our children's potential.

Q: Karishma, how can we do that with kindness to mothers? So much is put on mothers. How do we allow women to own this in a very healthy, non-judgmental way? We are very good at saying, "Here's the science. Now, unless you do this, this, this, and this, you're a bad mother."

I know that feeling too well; the guilt that so many mothers carry because of the science. We are told lists of things we must do to be able to tick the boxes and have children who are meeting their potential.

We need to look at the way our society is at the moment. We're



One thing we can be certain about is that we have the ability to create positive change. We can improve this world through the creation of well-adjusted, loving, empathetic humans.

entering a period where many people are questioning the status quo. We've been faced with phenomenal challenges that we have not had to deal with before. Parents are already stressed. Just add to that the complexities and responsibilities of raising children.

One thing we can be certain about is that we have the ability to create positive change. We can improve this world through the creation of well-adjusted, loving, empathetic humans. If I look back and reflect on all the aspects of parenting that contribute to the

creation of happy humans, there's one common thread and it's love. The language of love is the key ingredient. Most other aspects of positive parenting naturally unfold as a result of love. Love needs to be abundant, unconditional, and never withdrawn. When we combine those with being present for our children, and surrounding ourselves with a community of supportive individuals, we have the vital ingredients for a rewarding parenting style.

Q: That's beautiful! Thank you.



we cannot do
RECONCILIATION,
we must be
RECONCILIATION

LISA RAVEN is the Executive Director of Returning to Spirit, and a member of the delegation of indigenous leaders who met the Pope to invite him to Canada to apologize for the harms inflicted on generations of indigenous families. Here, she shares what reconciliation means to her. Her organization delivers two, four-day sequential and experiential workshops on reconciliation. You can find out more at <https://www.returningtospirit.org/>.

The truth and reconciliation process¹ involves resolving conflict from the past, often between governments, non-state bodies, and groups of people. The process aims at healing the relationship between the opposing sides through uncovering facts, allowing for acknowledgment, mourning, and forgiveness – all toward the final goal of healing.

Reconciliation means being at peace – our ability to be at peace for longer periods of time. Therefore, reconciliation has everything to do with each of us as individuals, as opposed to the “other.” For a lot of people, that’s a difficult concept to grasp.

Some people in Canada believe that Indigenous people should “get over it already,” however, reconciliation is not a journey

with a destination. It is a series of moments and building relationships along the way, which are highlighted by peace, understanding, and mutuality.

For Indigenous people in Canada, reconciliation is in the language, and is a spiritual journey. There are no words for hate and resentment. There are words that describe those feelings, but there is also an understanding that if we hold those feelings we are actually harming ourselves. We are only meant to hold those feelings temporarily, because the translation of those words helps us understand that “as I hold this, I’m hurting myself, so I’m only holding it for a little while.”

“Knowing” or holding hurt and suffering from the past is described as “already knowing.” It’s that little

voice in your head that tells you the way things are, and the way people are – an “already knowing.” It’s like putting glasses on so we only see through that lens of judgment. It is like a boomerang that goes behind our backs, but then as soon as something happens, the feelings are re-triggered. For example, a couple of years ago, the discovery of children’s graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School brought all that stuff forward and created a nationwide reaction.

People are confused about what acceptance really means. I think we are stuck with the idea that acceptance means having to accept all that happened; but that’s not the case. We can’t change the past – it happened the way it happened. We can change our reaction to it, and how it lives in us today. I

RELATIONSHIPS

can remain the victim of another person forever, or forgiveness and letting go can help me *take back my power*. The other person could go to jail, but that does not heal my trauma. Forgiveness does. Forgiveness is not for the weak; it's for the strong. For Indigenous people, it is a part of who we are. The word for forgiveness in our language is so vast. It's an experience and a gift you give yourself. It has nothing to do with the other person.

Returning to Spirit, using visual and experiential processes, offers a gentle way of teaching; yet it's very disruptive, it wakes people up. It's like throwing a bucket of cold water on their faces.

I went to Rome and heard the Pope's apology. Great! However, no apology by the Pope or the government can take away the harm, and I think that is what people fail to recognize.

My favorite part of the Rome visit was being able to do pipe ceremonies alongside my brother Friar Francois Paradis at the General House of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and the genuine interest it sparked to know and understand us. That is an experience so many who came before me never had. They made sacrifices, they experienced pain, some never came home. I believe that the ancestors want reconciliation for me; maybe as

I heal, they are healing too. The best way I see to honor them is *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* (holistic health), and to pass that legacy of well-being on to my children and grandchildren.

Hatred and resentment are passed from generation to generation. There are people who never went to residential schools but are walking around like it happened to them, carrying and perpetuating the anger and resentment. Unfortunately, they do it at the cost of their own peace. I don't want to pass that stuff on to my son.

For the last 20 years, we've been trying to reconcile in a vacuum,



We can't change
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trying to heal without the other, and we need both. That's what's unique about our process. At Returning to Spirit, we are working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Each is different. And there are biases in judgment and assumptions on both sides.

We give them the tools to be able to set their biases aside for long enough to have a conversation. This is a tool for reconciling all relationships.

As I let go, as I continue creating peace for myself, I believe that my ancestors are also healing on the other side. It is beautiful that I'm living at a time in history where this is actually possible.

There are a lot of people, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who are frustrated because the idea of reconciliation feels like a never-ending cycle. So how do we move forward? By everybody recognizing that this is something we live with, that we need to do our own work rather than expecting other people to make it okay. The government can't do it for us.

How do we address generational trauma? By doing our own work. We're part of it all. It doesn't matter what country you go to, every single Indigenous culture

has a creation story. What runs through all those stories is that we are a part of creation, and we are made up of everything. Our bodies are 70% water, and our voices are part of the wind. How we speak, and how we take care of our possessions, we must take care of our wind.

I love the word *Namwayut*, which means we are all one.²

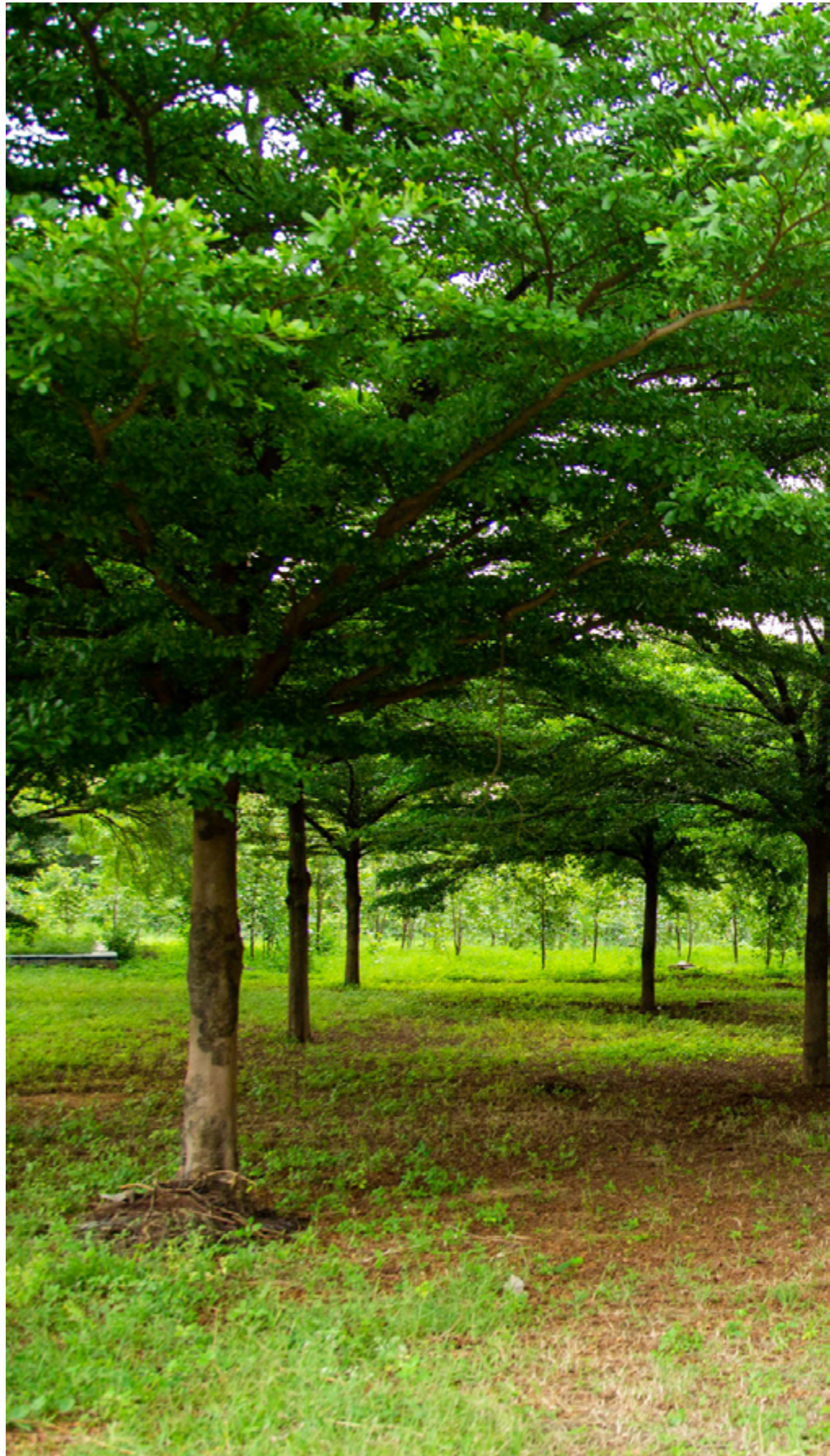
Throughout my journey, I have collected many moments of powerful reconciliation. No two have been the same, and the people are as diverse as the experience. I've come to see that there are many forms of reconciliation – it's not just one way. However, the feeling of reconciliation in my spirit, is the same, despite the road traveled. It makes me feel good, and it makes me feel alive.

¹ The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, began to be implemented in 2007. One of the elements of the agreement was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities, and all Canadians.

² *Namwayut-We Are All One* is the title of a book by Chief Robert Joseph

Every forest branch
moves differently
in the breeze, but
as they sway they
connect at the roots.

RUMI





Photograph at KANHA SHANTI VANAM, HYDERABAD

ENVIRONMENT, TEAMWORK, AND LEADERSHIP

ANANYA PATEL talks about the evolution of the Gigatonne Challenge, a grass roots environmental movement. She also explores leadership, why teams should sometimes take a pause to connect, and how a sense of responsibility toward the people involved helps her stay focused on the challenges at hand. This is part 2 of her interview with ELIZABETH DENLEY.



Next Steps in the Gigatonne Challenge

Q: How many teams are there around the world now participating in the Gigatonne Challenge?

At this point, we have around 70 teams – some not so active, some very active, some at level 1, some at level 4 – which is 40 times the amount of waste. It increases 10 times for each level.

I designed a lot of the crowdfunding material for social media, especially for the more focused campaigns to communicate with the world about the vision and the work that has been done.

Q: Apart from food waste, what other projects are involved?

There are a couple of teams in Canada working with energy, with their local councils. The councils are receptive to creating policies that limit the use of energy in office buildings.

For the teams in the southern hemisphere, a lot of the work is with sustainable zero-emission transport, from carts to electric vehicles. The Gigatonne Challenge helps the teams get electric vehicles for their work, so that they don't add to the problem.

Q: Ananya, where do you see this going? You've been there since the beginning stages. This is something that works at a grassroots level around the world, and it's coordinated out of a university. What sort of leadership will make this grow going forward so that it has a huge impact on the world?

I started out as a team member physically going to restaurants and food vendors, picking up bags of garbage, bringing them to compost, and actually doing the work. Now I'm helping other teams do that, because I have built a capacity, I've built some experiential knowledge.

I've spent time with communities who are experiencing this issue on

a much larger scale. I think I have a responsibility to support these communities, to help them pick up skills.

The climate crisis is something we've grown up with, and we can't ignore the way it's happening in the world. One of the things that really had an impact on me were the big fires in the Amazon. I remember thinking, "What do we do? What is the future for me?" I know a lot of people who were coming out of university and starting their careers, and trying to figure out who they are, when the pandemic hit. A lot of things were uncertain. At that point I was like, "It doesn't help to just fret about it."

If you can imagine a world where all these issues don't exist, maybe you can do something about them. It just made sense to me. I've always wanted my work to have an impact that is beyond myself, that means something more to the world, and this is something I have stumbled upon that gives me that.

Q: You're also a designer and a very good illustrator. How does that capacity help with this?

The teams do a lot of really hard meaningful work, but they don't have the tools or the capacity to share their stories in an impactful way. Telling their stories makes a huge difference. While designing

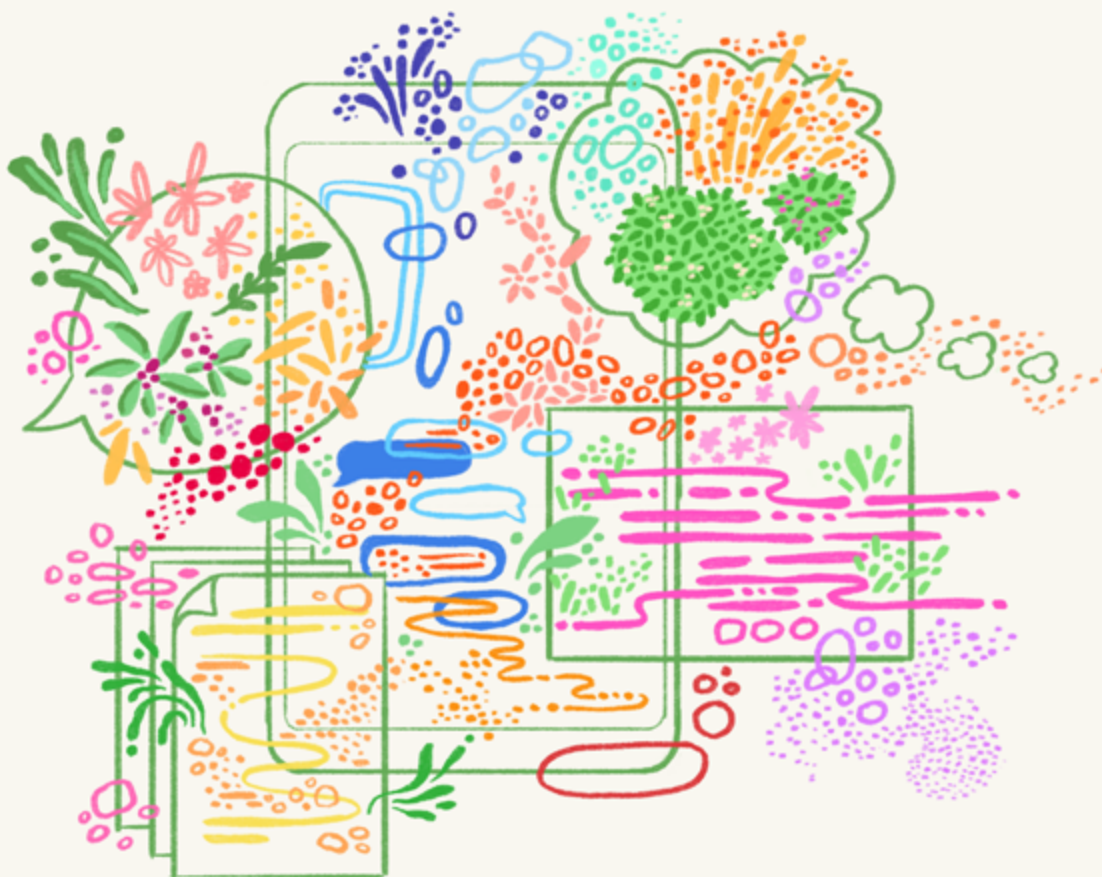
I've always wanted my work to have an impact that is beyond myself, that means something more to the world, and this is something I have stumbled upon that gives me that.

a lot of infographics and visual material for the Gigatonne Challenge, I have started to see how the creative aspect comes into play – communicating the story, and the design.

Tips for Young Leaders

Q: What qualities do you think are important for young leaders today, given the uncertainty of our future and the need to do something and not just wait for somebody else to do something?

When there is this intense need to do something, it's easy to get caught up in the work. I remember



being so focused on the project and making sure the team was okay that I didn't ask myself, "Am I okay?" Had I done that, I would have supported the team better. It's important to take a minute to assess yourself, what you're going through. It's difficult and challenging, and a lot of people have anxiety about it.

It's frustrating because things don't work out sometimes, and it's easy to just keep going and going, especially when you don't have much time. It's important to take a step back, assess how you're doing internally: Are you in

connection with yourself with why you're doing this work? Why are you in this space? While working with people, it's important to keep reminding yourself of these things, and place yourself in your world. It helps to keep going, otherwise you can easily feel burned out or lost. When I did connect with myself, I was able to communicate better with others.

When I was open about the challenges I was facing, the other team members were more open about what challenges they were facing. That created a space in the group where everyone felt it

was okay to share what they were going through.

Q: Is that how you deal with differences of opinion in the team? With a team of five, obviously you won't all agree on things all the time.

We haven't been in a position of insane conflict, but when everyone is feeling overworked or tired then conflicts bubble up. I just press pause on everything.

For example, one time we were not able to agree on how we were spending the money or what our

priorities were. We were all tired and feeling pressured, so I said, “Can we press pause?” That meant no more spending money for the next three days. We didn’t go to work for the next three days. We took a moment, and then we came together and had a physical meeting.

We spent half a day connecting with each other, talking about what was important to each of us, why these challenges were coming up, and why we were

having disagreements. That pause and reset helped us pick up and say, “Okay! Now we’ve understood everyone’s needs, what do we need to do as a team? In our group’s needs, everyone’s needs came into play. My training in Heartful Communication has really helped.

Q: Any last words?

The reason I’m able to continue working with people in this way is because I have a sense of responsibility toward them.

If you don’t have that sense of responsibility, you can’t do the work as effectively on an operational level. It’s important for me to remind myself why I’m doing it, what my role is, and what I need to do to make this work. Then balance that with accepting those things are not in my hands, as I need to be patient and mindful with those.

Illustrations by ANANYA PATEL



Forests by Heartfulness

SANGEETH PARVATAM is the Program Manager at Forests By Heartfulness. **BRENDA NETH** interviews him about the development of the programs, and the conservation that is developing at the grassroots level as a result.

Q: What are some of the successes at Kanha Shanti Vanam that led to the creation of the Forests By Heartfulness (FBH) initiative? What are some of the lessons learned?

Kanha Shanti Vanam was transformed during the last 7 years as a result of several interventions backed by a combination of science and intuition guided by spiritual practice.

For example, one initiative is the ex-situ conservation of critically endangered species, like *Syzygium travancoricum*, with only 15 trees spotted in the wild. Most of the conservation of these rare and endangered species was done without erecting steel or concrete structures, by providing the right natural conditions using shade-giving plants, rain guns, and lots of loving care.

Another successful initiative was the translocation of hundreds of

adult trees identified for felling during various road and housing developments in Hyderabad and other parts of the country. The survival rate has been astounding, given that tree translocation is fraught with many challenges.

But these initiatives are resource-intensive activities that can only be accomplished by committed teams, funding, and a lot of care.

I have personally learned the importance of involving the local community. Any project that is designed to benefit the community, can eventually become the community's, with FBH acting as a conduit or facilitator.

Q: Does FBH use the principles of permaculture, which was one of the key reasons for your involvement in the first place?

Yes, we have applied some of the core values of permaculture, like Earth Care, People Care, and

Fair Share, but our work also includes other aspects like species conservation, landscaping, creating meditative spaces, etc. I am a lover of permaculture principles for supporting ecosystems, food supply, and soil regeneration, but the main objective of FBH is conservation.

Q: You have shared a list of 231 species, the majority of which are trees that are currently being grown in 18 FBH nurseries across India. How do you determine which trees to grow in which nurseries, and where to plant them?

Thanks to its latitudinal and longitudinal spread, India is one of the 12 mega-biodiversity countries in the world. The Indian subcontinent can be broadly classified into 8 distinct floristic zones: the Western Himalayas, the Eastern Himalayas, Assam, the Indus plain, the Gangetic plain, the Deccan, Malabar, and





the Andamans. The species in these zones are not mutually exclusive, there are overlaps. When setting up the nurseries, species are carefully selected with the guidance of conservation experts from forestry, botany, and climate science, to match the zones of the nurseries, and efforts are taken to grow the saplings native to the zone.

Q: How is the land acquired for the plantation efforts? I understand there are three types of plantations. Will you tell us about them?

FBH looks for public spaces for plantation efforts to benefit the local communities. These include educational institutions, village common lands, industrial zones for greening, temple lands, etc. Plantation is only done after written approvals are obtained from the landholding authorities. The land rights, the plantations, and the produce always belong to the communities, not to FBH. We only create spaces of conservation by planting trees and eventually handing them over to the communities.



The type of plantation depends on the end-goal of the project. Is it to provide fruit and medicinal plants for the local community? Is it to enhance biodiversity and wildlife? Is it to create a microclimate and raise the local water table? Is it to sequester carbon from the atmosphere? None of these goals

ENVIRONMENT



are mutually exclusive, as you can imagine.

We primarily do block plantation, avenue plantation, and Heartyculture Dense Forest (HDF) creation. HDF is our proprietary methodology to create thriving mini forests within a short period of time. HDF is characterized by the choice of species selected, the placement of species based on their eventual canopy and height, and extensive use of activated biochar for soil remediation.

Q: What is biochar?

Biochar is made by burning twigs, branches, leaves, paddy husk, crop residue, etc. in the absence of oxygen. The process is called pyrolysis. It can be done in small-scale boilers or by burning in mud pits. The resultant product is a dark pellet of super light material that can crumble in your hands. Pellets are activated by soaking

them in fluids with high microbial content, such as nutrient-rich liquids, and the resultant product is activated biochar. This is then put in the holes before planting saplings. One unique feature of biochar is its surface area. Per unit weight, it has more surface area than any other substance on the planet. It can absorb, retain, and release nutrients to plants for several months.

We have experimented with biochar at Kanha Shanti Vanam and can vouch for its effectiveness. Now we use it in all our plantations.

Q: In 2019, FBH did a mass plantation of 64,000 saplings in 64 cities, each site receiving 1,000 saplings. How are the saplings doing now?

The mass plantation in 2019 was a reality check for whether we could pull off a pan-India plantation drive and sustain it. It

was a grand success and gave us the necessary confidence to create FBH as a pan-India initiative. The saplings are doing well, although survival rates vary according to location. Survival depends on several factors, including soil preparation prior to planting, health of the saplings, handling during plantation, administration of nutrients during and after plantation, and most importantly the first year of care and regular watering.

The costs are kept very low – to around \$1.92 for a one-year-old sapling – when the sites have a good water source, fencing to keep out intruders, locally-sourced materials, and lots of local community support.

Q: Why are trees so important in halting climate change? Why should farmers be interested in having their "bunds" (dirt borders for farms) planted with trees?



Planting trees is the cheapest and most sustainable way of combating climate change. The World Economic Forum has done a scientific study using satellite imaging, and determined that there is enough place on Earth to plant 1 trillion additional trees. They can sequester enough carbon dioxide to keep climate change under control.

Tree-based agriculture, known as agroforestry, is a potent solution, especially in countries like India with huge tracts of agricultural land. Trees on farm land provide an alternate source of income for the farmers and insure them against crop failures. They also prevent soil erosion, raise the water table, and improve soil quality.

Q: In FBH, you make a sankalpa, a prayerful intention, when planting a sapling. What is that experience like for you, and how do you feel it impacts the trees and the planters?

Trees are vibratory beings with life in them, just like us. They respond to love, care, and benevolence. A prayerful intention at the time of delivering the sapling to Mother Earth goes a long way in its growth. Although I don't live in Kanha, I visit there often, and I see phenomenal growth, even after a gap of two months. It can only be attributed to the elevated vibratory levels of Kanha, to which trees respond more than humans. This is not a matter of speculation but of observation.

Q: What are some of the challenges facing FBH as you move forward with your goals of 30 million saplings planted by 2025, involving 10,000 farmers and microentrepreneurs, and the preservation of 80 endangered medicinal plants?

The challenges are many, but none that can't be overcome. What works in one region may not work in others. Ready availability of

saplings for plantation, suitable land with clear title, the support of local communities, and providing care during the initial months are just some challenges I can think of. This is where collaboration helps. Tree plantation is not an exact science and there are many things we can learn from others who travel this path. Collaborations allow us to play to our strengths and address the gaps in end-to-end project implementation.

Q: Do you foresee collaborations with other Heartfulness organizations outside of India?

Yes, it's only a matter of time before this will become a global movement spreading to all corners of the world. The barriers are disappearing, and technology is playing a big role. For example, a simple YouTube video on how to produce and use activated biochar for crop management can go viral, and the principle be applied everywhere.

Clean out a corner of your
mind and creativity will
instantly fill it.

DEE HOCK

Creativity

Photography by DANIEL APODACA





ART THERAPY FOR

Human Suffering

GUILA CLARA KESSOUS, UNESCO Artist for Peace and art therapist, uses drama therapy to help people “let go” of their suffering through a cathartic process. It is a way for people in Rwanda, Bangladesh, Congo, and Afghanistan to find solace. Guila paints the portrait of four people suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder who she accompanied to their respective countries. She has also designed a course on “Theatre and Humans Rights” that is taught at Harvard University.



Photo credit : <https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/>

The Prince and the Poor Man

The woman with black eyes has a wonderful way with French words. Intimidated, she clicks her tongue against her teeth and looks up to me. I reassure her and make it clear that I will not ask her to talk, but to express what lies within her, deep within her, to let it out. I know about her story: Martha lives in Ngoma, in Rwanda's eastern province, near the women's prison. This mother of five witnessed the slaughter of the Tutsis in 1994. She, too, once sincerely believed she could kill "for the good of humanity," as the saying went back then on the waves of Mille Collines radio.

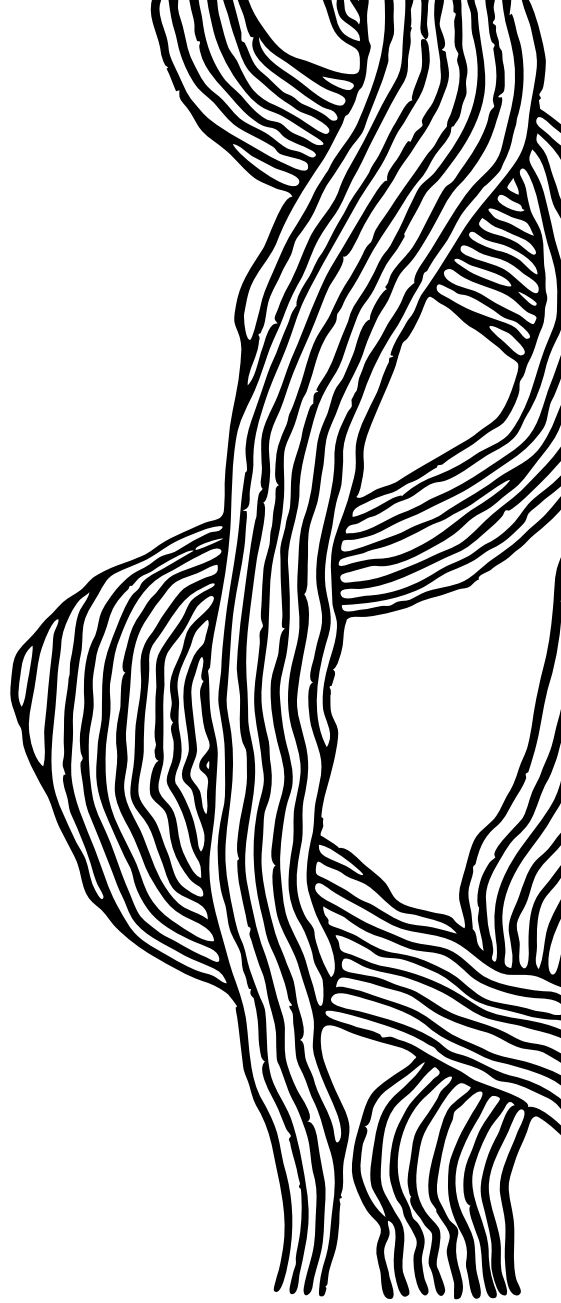
I suggest we perform the exercise of "The Prince and the Poor Man" that Peter Brook used to teach a person to find "the right posture." Asking her to portray a noble personality, I see the body of the septuagenarian straightening up and I watch her as she finds a glorious way to hold her head, so typical of faith in oneself and faith in humanity, found only in people who have not lost the beauty of their ingenuity. I try to spur her on, suggesting she tries to walk like a queen, taking care to slowly spread her feet on the ground, heel first and then toes. I notice the effort of her leg. It carries the history and muscles of thighs that were strong enough to drag themselves out of this hell.

She looks around her with an air of Banyiginya haughtiness; the Nyiginya clan, who represent the nobility of the Batutsis.

I then submit a text to her from *Hamlet*:

... I know not "seems."
'Tis not alone in my inky cloak,
good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn
black,
Nor windy suspiration of
forced breath,
No nor the fruitful river in the
eye,
Nor the dejected havior of the
visage,
Together with all forms,
moods, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly.
These indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man
might play;
But I have that within which
passeth show,
These but the trappings and
the suits of woe.

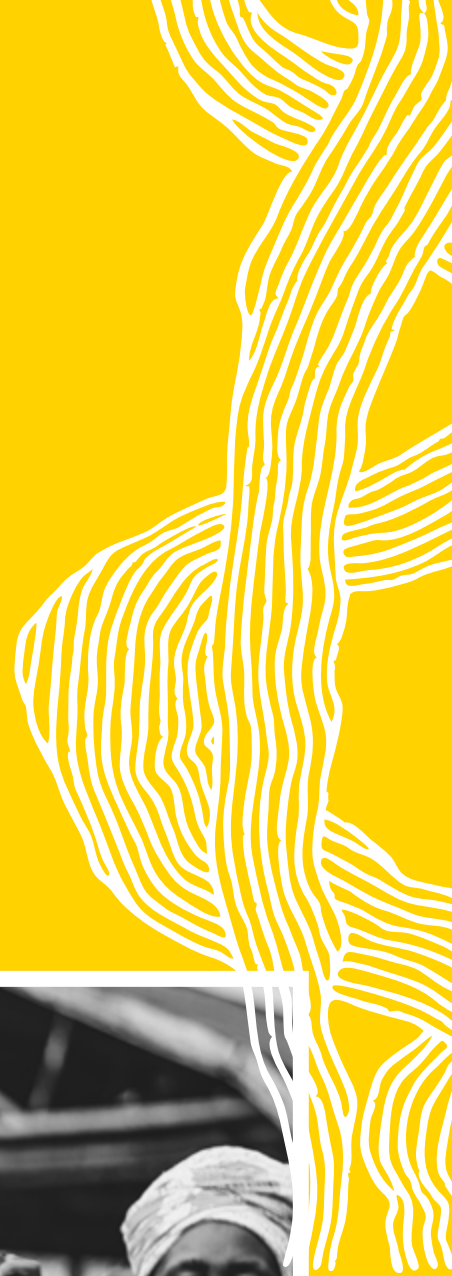
Before it even ends, I see her body shrivel up, withdrawing from the bliss of forgetfulness to return to what Peter Brook called "the Poor Man," the human broken by their condition. She utters each and every one of these words distinctly while facing me. She concludes with a whisper, "*Mu-ra-ko-ze*," which is the Kinyarwanda word for thank you, and then she curtsies!



I have no hatred in me

Francesca is repeating the sentence to me. She emphasizes every word and makes sure I'm jotting everything down. "How could I only explain that to my family? Since they're rejecting me and think this is all my fault. I'm a disgrace to them." I ask her if she's willing to work on this feeling of shame with acting. She nods. Francesca was raped in the Congo, as so many other women have been, since rape is a weapon of war in the DRC.

When she talks to me, she blinks a lot, just to be absolutely sure that she is still alive. So often have men imposed their will on her that at some point she was not sure of anything anymore. "I felt this predator had no desire, he just wanted to dominate." Francesca lives in Bunia, the capital city of the Ituri province. She has endured many sexual assaults since she was a little girl, including in school where this kind of punishment is common. I suggest trying a body awakening exercise that will allow her to slowly come



Photography by ANNIE SPRATT



back to herself and to possess her sore body again.

The “Energetic Shower” exercise involves “stretching one’s arms toward the sky” while imaginary drops “run” from the ceiling by moving one’s fingers and slowly bringing them down to micro-massage the forehead, the eyes, the cheeks, the chin, the back of the neck and then the neck. I watch her as she proceeds meticulously. I can feel the skin untighten on

her forehead, the wrinkles fade out. Once the neck area has been reached, it’s time to switch to soft right-hand taps on the left side of the body. She talks to me: “If my daughter saw me doing this, she’d tell me ‘Mom, stop, you’re almost fifty now.’” She pats her left shoulder with her right hand and then the full length of her left arm. Then, the opposite. I can see her body stretch out and ready itself to “embody” a role that will help it healing. Francesca is looking at me, intrigued.

I hand a poem to her:

So long as the blade has not
Cut off that brain ...

These lines from Rimbaud make her smile. And I see her surrendering to the role, a sheer force getting hold of her. She now hits me with verse:

That white, green and fatty
parcel,
Whose steam is never fresh ...

At the end of the poem, she repeats to me

He won’t get his hands on that
one.
Clearly, he won’t get his hands
on that one.

as if, for a fleeting moment, she had managed to break free from tragedy.

I would have preferred not to choose

The interpreter is looking at me because he doesn’t know whether he must translate what has just been said. Hossain is a twenty-four-year-old father who doesn’t understand why he should stay with his child since his wife is there to look after him. As the others, he has fled and tries to live here in Cox’s Bazar under this makeshift tent strapped to bamboo pegs.

Despite humanitarian aid, the Rohingyas’ situation has not really evolved, and Hossain is nervous. The interpreter resumes his translation: “I would have preferred not to choose. If I had known, I never would have done this. I would not have chosen to get her pregnant. She shouldn’t have kept the child.”

I ask the interpreter to tell him that I’m not here to judge him but to offer him a way to explore the emotions he’s experiencing through drama-therapy. “Now is not the time for drama. How is drama going to help me find a solution?” he says, rolling his eyes. He seems exasperated.

I suggest we perform a breathing technique called “the sniper’s breathing.” He listens to me, suddenly showing interest. “Sniper?” he asks.



Photography by AG Z

I smile, “Yes, snipers do this to calm down and enter a state of great focus. Try and you’ll see. Close your eyes.”

I teach him this deep, abdominal breathing, taking in the air for four seconds, holding your breath for another four, and then breathing out for eight seconds. I see his puny body carrying it out. Then, after three times, I tell him he’s free to open his eyes.

He has calmed down; his chest isn’t expanding as much and his eyes have narrowed.

“Now, let’s play,” I say. He raises his eyebrow. “You’re going to be

your pregnant wife and you’re going to tell me what you think of Hossain.”

He laughs and sits immediately, pretending to cover himself with something.

“What are you doing?” I ask.

He tells me that his wife always wraps herself in a coat to protect her child from the damp atmosphere. This delineation brought by the coat is symbolic, but it will eventually help him realize, while impersonating her, how difficult it is to be a mother. And when the role play ends, he will agree to try to stay by her side.

All the faces in the world

I’m on the phone with Sabba and I ask her if she wants us to start working together using art.

In precarious English, she tells me that yes, she does: “I want to become other, different roles, different faces. I’d like to be all the faces in the world today.”

She lives in the small town of Charikar where she hasn’t had the opportunity to go to school for over a month now. She listens to the radio fervently because it’s her only way to stay connected with the world and to catch educational

broadcasts. I suggest we do a little focusing exercise by describing her radio set. “It is small, rectangular, black.”

I encourage her to speak in a louder voice and dare her to be more confident.

And she follows up.

“The radio set has buttons to choose the frequencies.”

I now ask her to insist

on some words, which she does willingly.

“This radio is BEAUTIFUL, POWERFUL, and MINE.”

This last word comes with a bang, and I can hear the pride that emanates from it.

I tell her what we will do next:

“Now Sabba, try to become this radio set and speak out about what you’re going through on a daily basis and how you’re here to

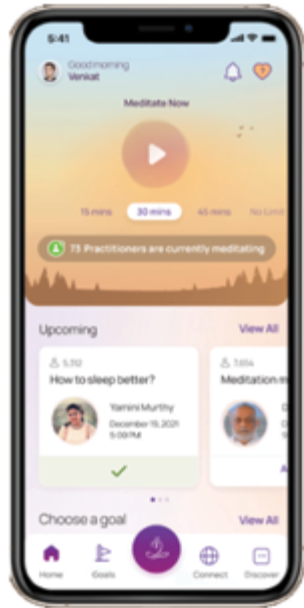
comfort Sabba.”

Silence. Absorption of the information, then an imaginative effort. There’s a dilemma in the mind of this fourteen-year-old girl. I can hear her questioning herself, “How am I supposed to do this, I, who don’t have a professor anymore, to know if I’m following the instructions correctly?” And then she lets go, a breeze of courage ushers in the role play. She’s a symbol of courage and a symbol of hope.



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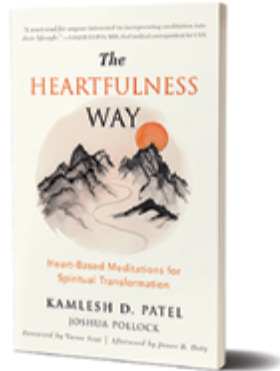
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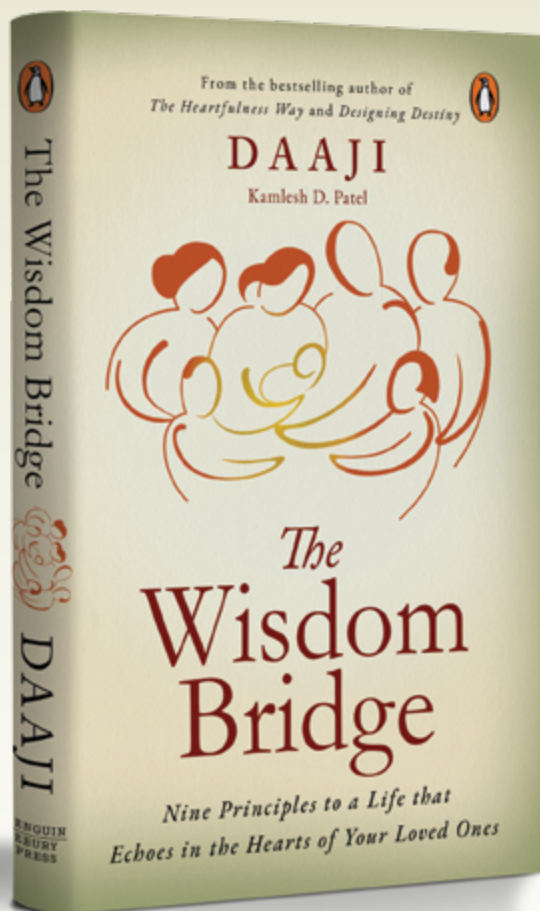
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