

April 2019

heartfulness

Consciousness

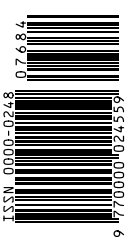
DAAJI Yogic Psychology - Memory

NEALE DONALD WALSCH The Solution
to the Biggest Problem in the World Today

KATHLEEN SCARBORO Cultural Identity

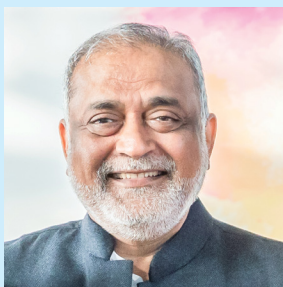
CHRIS GERMER The Power of Self-Compassion

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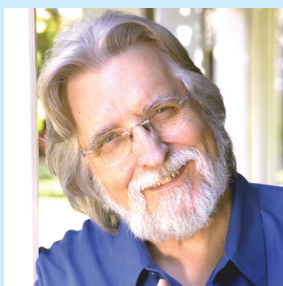
The editors

contributors



Kamlesh Patel

Known as Daaji, he is the current Heartfulness Guide. A Yogi with the capacity of Yogic Transmission, he offers a practical, scientific approach to spiritual training in the field of consciousness to millions worldwide.



Neale Donald Walsch

Neale is the author of 37 books on contemporary spirituality, including seven New York Times bestsellers. His *Conversations with God* series has been translated into 35 languages and read by millions around the world. He travels extensively focusing on what he calls the most important question facing humanity today: Is it possible that there is something we don't fully understand about God and about Life, the understanding of which would change everything?



Chris Germer

Chris is a clinical psychologist and lecturer at Harvard Medical School. He is a co-developer of the Mindful Self-Compassion program, author of a number of books and a founding faculty member of the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy and the Center for Mindfulness and Compassion, Cambridge Health Alliance, Harvard Medical School. He teaches and leads workshops internationally and has a private practice in Arlington, Massachusetts, USA.



Kathleen Scarboro

When Kathleen received her first commission for a mural painting from The Public Art Workshop of Chicago, it was the beginning of a lifelong career in public art. Currently she is working

on a book entitled *Painting India: Women and Color* with Catherine Servan-Schreiber and Deva Villeroy, with reproductions of her paintings accompanied by quotes from talented Indian writers of the past and present on the themes developed in the paintings.



Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee

Llewellyn is the founder of The Golden Sufi Center. He has specialized in the area of dream work, integrating Sufism with modern psychology. He focuses on spiritual responsibility and awakening the global consciousness of oneness. He has written several books about the feminine, the world soul and spiritual ecology.



innerview

26

Dr Chris Germer

The Power of Self
Compassion - part 2



focus:

Consciousness

08

Neale Donald Walsch

The Solution to the
Biggest Problem in the
World Today

12

Rosalind Pearmain

The Beauty of Unfolding
Consciousness

thought in action

18

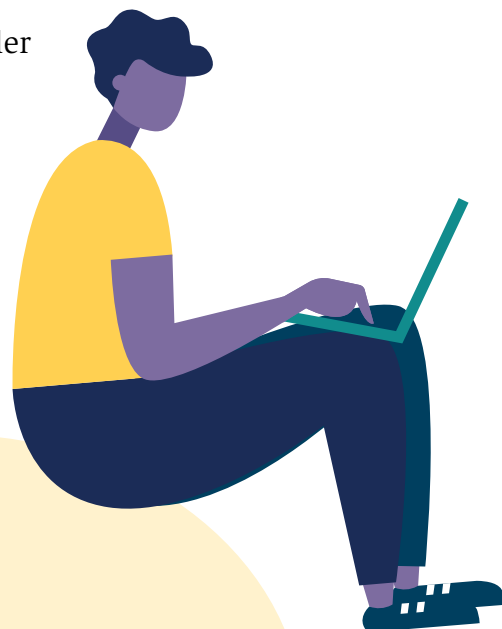
Dr Ichak K. Adizes

Why We Need Mutual
Trust and Respect

20

Ravi Venkatesan

The Heartful Leader
- part 3



Heartfulness

inside



it changes everything

36

Thierry Casasnovas
Choosing Life
- part 4

40

Charles Eisenstein
Letter to My Younger Self

44

Llewelyn Vaughan-Lee
Rejoining the Great
Conversation

be inspired

50

Kamlesh Patel
Yogic Psychology
- part 4



60

Alice Russo
The Invisible

In the field

75

The Coop Cross Country
FIS World Cup, Cogne,
Italy

taste of life

64

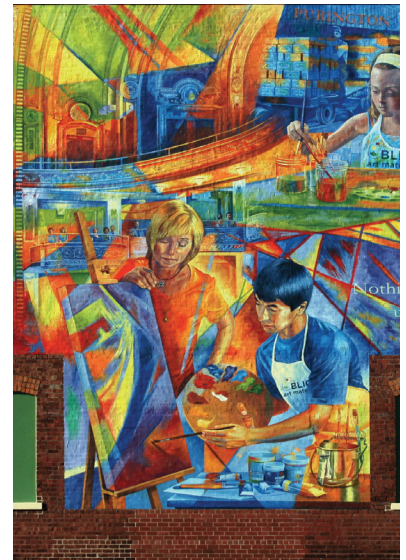
The Joliet Mural Artists
Cultural Identity - an Art
Essay

70

Alanda Greene
Potato Treasure


74

Heartfulness Yogasanas
Halasana



what's up

80



*We do not see things as they are,
we see them as we are.*

Anaïs Nin



focus

consciousness

THE SOLUTION

to the ~~Biggest Problem~~
in the World Today



NEALE DONALD WALSCH addresses the underlying cause of our global dysfunctions today and challenges us all to solve them, together, through one single decision. Are we ready for this?

Photo Credit: CHRISTOPHER BRISCOE



We – you and I – have a chance to solve the biggest problem in the world today. All we have to do is make a single decision. But so far we haven't been able to make that decision, because the biggest problem in the world today is that most people don't know what the biggest problem in the world today is.

Now that's remarkable, because this problem is so huge, it is causing all of the other problems, all of the 'smaller' problems, that we hear about every day. That includes global warming, planetary political upheaval, worldwide economic disparity, endless wars, and widespread individual frustration and dissatisfaction with the conditions of life.

All of these predicaments are the fallout, the direct result, of one pervasive condition. That condition can be described in one word.

Alienation.

Human beings are alienated from each other. And we're experiencing more alienation every day. Overnight we've found ourselves in bigger versions of an 'Us Against Them' world than most of us have ever encountered before.

Nothing that's gone wrong with the world is our fault. Nothing. We're not responsible for any of it. Not a single piece of it. It's all *their* doing.

It's those unwanted immigrants, those unsatisfied minorities, those unhappy women, those right-wing radicals, those left-wing nut jobs, those unacceptable gays, those uninformed students, those dumb conservatives, those empty-headed liberals, those unmotivated government assistance recipients. It's those 'others' who just keep making things difficult.

Not everyone feels this way, of course, but everyone can *feel* everyone who feels this way. So it's affecting all of us. Each day it's producing distressing headlines, angry blogs, name-calling speeches, childish rants, attacking tweets, bullying diatribes, finger-pointing tirades, and violence-laden actions.

And not just 'over there'. It used to be 'over there', in that other country, in that other town, in that other place. But now it's right here, in our own town, in our own country, and sometimes, sadly, in our own hearts.

Why? Because alienation inevitably arises in the aftermath of ongoing citizen frustration. And citizen frustration inevitably arises in the aftermath of ongoing societal dysfunction. And societal dysfunction inevitably arises in the aftermath of ongoing systemic failure. And that's exactly what we're faced with here. Long-term, ongoing, systemic failure.

None of the systems we've put in place to make life better for all of us are working. There are some rare exceptions, but in the main, most are failing to produce the outcomes they were intended to produce.

FOCUS

Wait. It's worse. *They're actually producing the opposite.*

Our political systems, our economic systems, our social systems, even our vaunted worldwide Internet systems, are *hurting* us, not helping us. And, saddest of all, our spiritual systems, which so many had hoped would bring us closer to God and closer to each other, have done exactly the opposite.

All of this can be reversed, however, and all with a simple flip of humanity's Belief Switch. We merely have to turn off our belief in Separation.

It is the idea that we are separate from each other and from God that has generated the conditions that have produced – and continue to create and tolerate – the predicaments mentioned earlier.

Are you aware that still today, in the first quarter of the 21st century, 1.5 billion people have no access to clean water? That more than 1.7 billion still have no electricity? That nearly 2.5 billion of our fellow humans still live without indoor plumbing? *That's one quarter of the human race.*

Now one might argue that these are but inconveniences. Yet hundreds of thousands die each year as a result of the unhealthy conditions arising out of these 'inconveniences'.

And consider this: Every hour more than 650 children die of starvation on the planet.

Could any of this occur if our species as a whole embraced a consciousness of Oneness? No. So what is being invited today by Life Itself is a movement on the part of every individual not just to be *aware* of our Oneness, but to *live* it.

For humanity, this has become the essential path. This is what it will take for us to move forward with our evolution on Earth. And we can do this by making one simple decision.

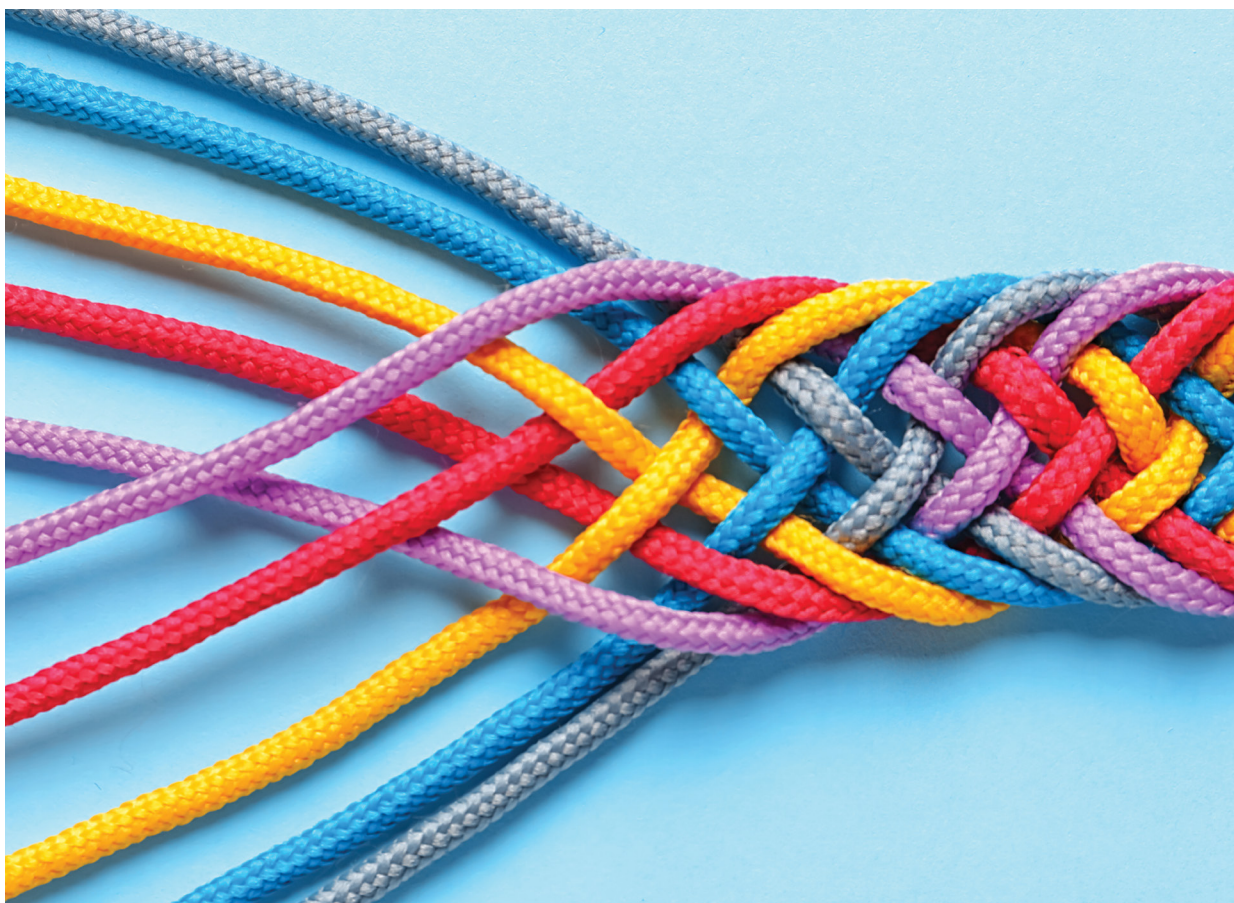
Adopting the idea that we are Spiritual Beings, One Being, is not about creating a science-fiction-esque utopian society. But we can create a planetary community of far more loving, peaceful, safe and joyous people, thriving and not constantly struggling, relaxed and not continually straining, celebrating and not endlessly competing or opposing.

Put into question form, the decision for all humans comes down to this:

1. Are we temporary physical beings, or are we Eternal Spiritual Beings Manifesting Physically?
2. Are we completely separate entities, or One Essence Manifesting Individually?

Basically, the question is, "What is our True Nature?" Our life as it is now being lived offers us a chance to demonstrate our answer. And this is something that each of us is doing, right here, right now.

Should we choose to write a New Cultural Story, one which announces and declares that humans are Spiritual Beings and All One – united with each other and with The Creator – everything would change on this planet. Our motivations, our intentions, our objectives, and our interactions would be altered at every level. Our relationships in this civilization – nation-with-nation, religion-with-religion, race-with-race, conservative-with-liberal, man-with-woman, straight-with-gay, young-with-old – would become civil at last.



Our problem of Alienation, our idea that violence is a legitimate means of addressing differences, our condition of insufficiency and our unnecessary suffering endured by billions ... all of this and more would disappear from the Earth, dissolved by new ideas of ourselves that would quickly induce the abandonment of our most damaging self-concepts.

Does this mean we would create a life on Earth without a single concern or challenge of any kind? No, of course not. Adopting the idea that we are Spiritual Beings, One Being, is not about creating a science-fiction-esque utopian society. But we *can* create a planetary community of far more loving, peaceful, safe and joyous people, thriving and not constantly struggling, relaxed and not continually straining, celebrating and not endlessly competing or opposing.

Can we do it? Can our species embrace a Consciousness of Oneness, of Unity with each other and with The Divine? I believe we can. And there are many tools we can use. All we have to do is intend to do so, and our intention will act as a powerful magnet, with the awareness of those tools and how to use them being drawn to us from many sources – not the least of which may very well be the magazine you are reading right now.

So read on. And read often. And commit to living the truth, if it is your truth, that We Are All One.

This article is adapted from Neale's latest book, *The Essential Path*, to be published in June and now available for pre-order at most online bookstores. Neale Donald Walsch may be reached for personal interaction at www.CWGConnect.com.

The Beauty of Unfolding Consciousness

ROSALIND PEARMAIN

shares feelings and experiences about how consciousness evolves in the heart through human life, and how meditation allows us to access those subtler states of fluid being we knew as children.



When we see our natural world in documentary films, we are stunned and awed by the exquisite beauty of form, process and intricate complexity in biological systems.

I wonder if we could see the unfolding of consciousness within human beings, we would be even more deeply moved. It could be something more dimensional than a tree growing, a crystal forming, a choir or symphony in harmony, and all in its formation creating such a beautiful wave form, a vibration, a mellifluous cadence to enhance the whole universe.

I imagine that we come from a fluid and entirely connecting flow of being-love. At birth, our soul flower enters into the density of our human vehicle of sentience. It affords a solid shock of sensory waves – the new field for our consciousness to re explore.

This field of consciousness is our shimmering, vibrant space of many felt domains that reveal our world to us.

The sphere of heart mind manifests the embodied experience of the present moment.

There are many embodied and visceral sources of experience and knowing that unfold through our awareness each day.

For a baby, they are merged into a unity of senses, feelings, emotions and the gathering grasp of meaning – always within a relational connectivity.

As language slowly offers a shorthand for these moments, we are able to exercise a more instrumental grasp of our consciousness and share this with others. At the same time, increasing coordination and motor skills open up possibilities of spatial experience in speed, in trajectory, in weight and lightness, and emerging control and direction.

Also our intellect gathers increasing discernment to apply to understanding.

Meanwhile, our sense of self is becoming more sharply edged. It is also sensed as a vulnerable, small craft floating in a vast ocean of life and the universe. It seeks to feel more secure and more solid to face its unfolding challenges.

Reflecting on this wondrous journey through childhood, we can be very moved by the openness and curiosity in children, without judgment, and the sense of their consciousness offering a space of such expansion, discovery, joy and intensity. Being immersed in the present moment allows for loss of self in the action of the game or the story. Knowing is about body experience; moving as a snake or a bear is the most immediate way for young children to access consciousness of the experience of the animal through their heart-minds.

Yet it is a field of depth and feeling. There are terrifying monsters as well as benevolent heroes, and there are many limitations and disappointments to face as well as fun to enjoy.

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FOCUS

As adults, increasingly we have learnt to use our shorthand maps to navigate life experiences. As left-brain devices, they give us abstract, cognitive schemas to shape and organize our present experience into predictable patterns. But the vaguer, felt, implicit background of the present moment of consciousness is often increasingly ignored in the rush of life pressures. Yet these implicit, tacit areas of consciousness are our underlying ground of relation, of meaning and depth to our evolving sense of being. They are just as important as the linear flow of doing, thinking and reacting. These moments of being may be tasted in nature, in rest, in connection with each other, and in response to music and beauty.

Meditation starts to reverse some of these processes. It allows us to put to one side the automatic categorizing and naming of the contents of our awareness into words and concepts. It allows us to sink through and dissolve the fixed patternings and shapings of our experience into more subtle and precise feelings and qualities. Different sensory experiences may be far more synaesthetic and intertwined during meditation – as they were in our infancy. We rediscover an openness and feeling base to our field of consciousness. The exquisite and mysterious heart as the subtle organ of perception and consciousness is central to this field of consciousness. It seems to operate both as a radar system and an organizing and synthesizing

matrix. It integrates and brings our field of awareness into a coherent and resonant equilibrium. Its dynamic spaciousness contains everything, whether positive or negative. We are reminded of the joy of that present centered mode of awareness that we tasted as children.

As we open ourselves to this deeper, subtler ground of awareness of the heart, we start to resonate with our divine Source within. With Heartfulness Meditation, the frequency of Transmission helps to purify our heart and dissolve layers that have obscured this presence from our conscious awareness. As the sense of self becomes less hard-edged and more diffuse in this being-feeling-sensing state, we intrinsically feel nature more directly. We feel a kinship of humanness through heart connections rather than mind thoughts. We are part of things like a wave rather than a particle. Our field of feeling consciousness expands – with loving prayers and suggestions, and in meditative gatherings across the world.

This process has a quality of beauty that calls us further. It is more transparent, more delicate, more refined; reminiscent of the world we came from perhaps. Many of us recall special moments as children, where we were transported in awareness by pools of stillness, depth or wonder unexpectedly opening in nature; or in moments of worship; or in the atmosphere created by pious people

This process has a quality of beauty that calls us further. It is more transparent, more delicate, more refined; reminiscent of the world we came from perhaps. Many of us recall special moments as children, where we were transported in awareness by pools of stillness, depth or wonder unexpectedly opening in nature; or in moments of worship; or in the atmosphere created by pious people with whom we came in contact.

with whom we came in contact. Some children's storybooks provide a taste of these ethereal and more transparent worlds in the realms of the Faery and other magical places. We find wonderful transformational elements, such as a fire of roses in *The Princess and Curdie* by George MacDonald, or Lothlórien in *Lord of the Rings*. Music is also an element that transports us to more subtle landscapes within the heart mind field.

There are also the different myths and stories from different cultures that illustrate deep spiritual themes, inspiring heroics and ennobling struggles. They offer a colorful play of the human drama through the ages. They give a rich psychic ground for our symbols, imagination and intuition.

There is a kind of tension in life's journey between the earlier eagerness to embrace the total experience of being embodied and alive and the later one of savoring simpler, subtler, beautiful essences. This is very well understood in the approach to Japanese Noh theatre.

Something inspires us to follow a spiritual way, where we direct our consciousness more and more towards the deeper, softer and plainer sense of being within our core. Something attracts us towards finer feelings and increasing balance, away from the turbulent waters we have encountered in our consciousness. We seek resonance with our inner Beloved and a larger field of consciousness is revealed by that presence at the most subtle level felt by our hearts. This can be radiated around us to include the whole field of our heart-mind consciousness.

We are no longer an isolated particle in a sea of energy. Instead we feel deeply connected with the Source of creation, with the hearts of others, with nature, and both the suffering and inspiration of humanity.

There may be glimpses of a higher perspective – how within a meditation group each one's field of consciousness is combined to create a higher frequency of love. This can affect the whole world like a circling necklace of jewels.

Each human gift can grow and contribute to a heightened resource of synergy, more and more aligned with the divine Source. And the resulting higher vibrational frequency affects not only this world but others, too, where the laws of space and time are perhaps in a different key and there are different joys and illuminations.

How extraordinary to be afloat in this cosmic sea of consciousness, guided by our beloved, wise and revered teachers and sages, deeply grateful for life, for being within our heart Source, for being in this unfolding mystery.





Thought in action





*All the world is made of faith, and
trust, and pixie dust.*

J.M. Barrie,
from *Peter Pan*

Why We Need MUTUAL TRUST AND RESPECT

ICHAK K. ADIZES shares his views on the importance of symbiosis and synergy for the success of any system, be it organizational, social or individual.

There is need for a culture of mutual trust and respect, a culture of cooperation and collaboration. I am talking about the introduction of synergy, where two plus three is not five but six. In the interaction of diverse entities, two being different from three, something new is created through cross pollination; it is a value that couldn't have been created unless there was an interaction among diverse opinions or know-hows. For collaborative interaction to exist in diversity there must be mutual respect.

This interaction must be based on perceived commonality of interests. If the diverse parties do not share interests, do not share in the value they have created, why would they constructively interact? It must be symbiotic. There is, however, a problem: Since over time, as conditions change, commonality of interests get threatened, so to endure mutual trust is required.

But Mutual Trust and Respect (MT&R) seem to be internally incompatible. For mutual respect there must be disagreement, a byproduct of diversity. On the other hand, for mutual trust, we should be in agreement. How to resolve this catch-22?

What should we agree on?

On our common interest.

And what can we disagree on?

On what to do and how to create value for the benefit of us all.



We should agree on what we are prone to disagree about (what are our common interests), and we can disagree on what we are prone to agree in order to avoid the pain imbedded in arguing (disagree on what and how to do).

MT&R is the foundation of a true socio-democratic system. It is democratic, which means we learn from each other's differences of opinion. It is socio, in the sense that there is a social consciousness to share obtained, added values with everybody, not just a certain part of the society at the expense of other parts of the society.

So how should we grow as a society, or as a company, or as a family?

By growing *jointly*.

By capitalizing on each other's differences *for the benefit of everybody*.

That is what Adizes Methodology is all about.

That is why I call it a *Symbergetic™* system – symb from symbiotic, for mutual interest, and *ergetic* from synergetic, which means growing.

How do we make that happen? Not just with good intentions. There is a tested well-documented program. It takes between one to three years to bring companies to full utilization of the system. The results have been exceptional. It produced exceptional sustainable growth.

If you have:

1. The right people who welcome disagreements because they learn from them, i.e. people who have controllable egos,
2. The right collaborative disciplined team decision-making process,
3. The right organizational structure that fosters diversity and not sameness, and

4. Have unifying common vision and values, you will create and foster a culture of mutual trust and respect.

It has been proven with evidence, working with thousands of companies in over fifty-two countries, from start-ups to the largest on earth. It will minimize disintegration and maximize the freed energy from internal destructive conflicts to be devoted to the external market for a competitive advantage. It applies to any system, whether it's a country, a business, a family, or an individual human being.

Just sharing,
Ichak Kalderon Adizes

This blog post was featured in the Huffington Post on March 13, 2017.

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<http://www.ichakadizes.com/why-we-need-mutual-trust-and-respect/>

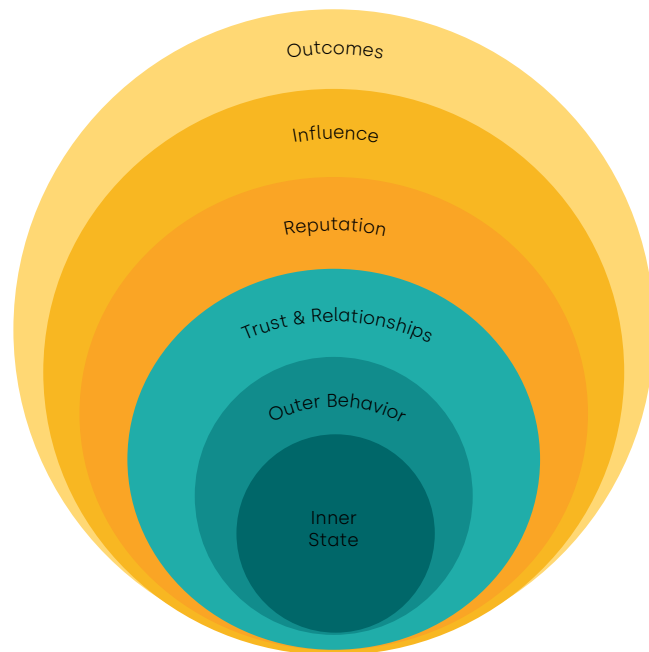
THE HEARTFUL LEADER

- part 3 -

Extraordinary outcomes through inspiration

TRUST IS EVERYTHING

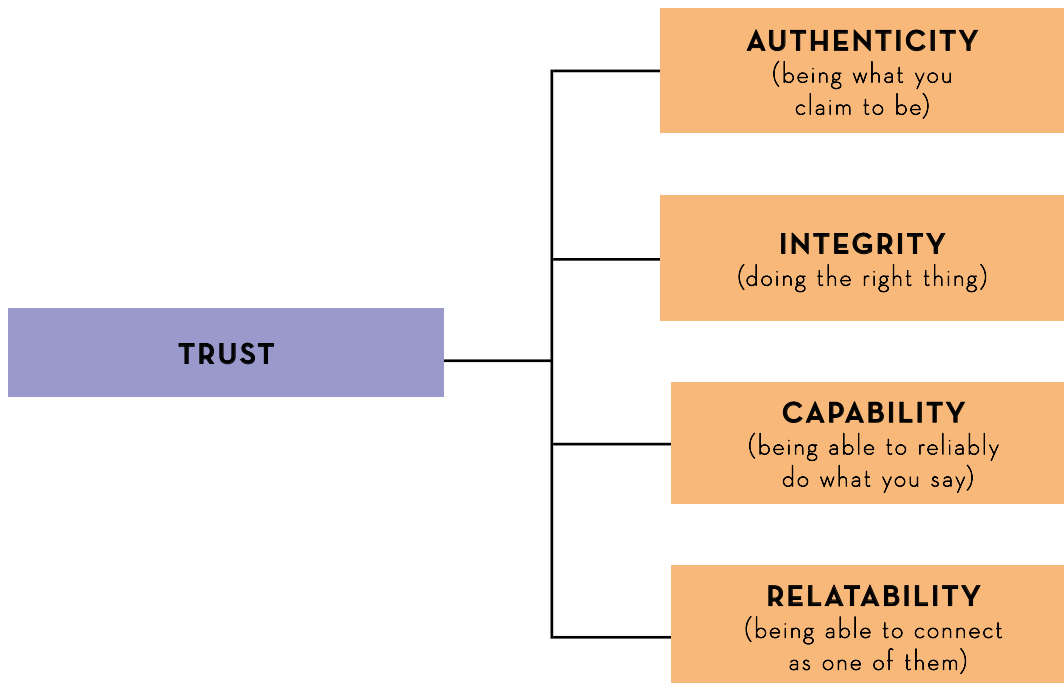
In previous articles,
RAVI VENKATESAN
introduced the Heartful
Leader framework and
took a deeper look at
Reputation, and ways to
manage it. Now let's look
at Trust more closely.



Building trust is an essential part of Heartful leadership. Many times, people mix being trustworthy with other things. For example, being liked, being popular, being smart, being humorous etc. It is entirely possible to like someone, enjoy conversations with them, but not trust them at all. It is also possible, though less common, to trust someone but not like them at all.

Trust, like Reputation, takes a lot to build and very little to lose. Once lost, it is also extremely difficult to rebuild. There are four key factors that create trust. If these are managed well, they go a long way in creating, maintaining and enhancing trust.





1. AUTHENTICITY:

Many times leaders exaggerate or embellish what they are, or what they can do, or their backgrounds. Sometimes this is done without much thought or any kind of malicious intent. However, as soon as their subsequent actions don't support how they initially came across, others lose trust in them, and then they struggle to get anything done. Authenticity also requires courage, because sometimes it means expressing what may not be palatable. Think about people with whom you interact. Is there someone you would describe as a 'straight shooter', or 'what you see is what you get'? These are some of the ways in which we recognize authenticity.

Tips to be authentic:

- Many times, leaders feel vulnerable in exposing themselves transparently, because they feel like they have to sugar coat or hide bad news. Try to take that leap and share some bad news transparently, you will find that people who receive it, actually react better than you expect, and appreciate your authenticity.

- Leaders often hesitate to admit their mistakes. Try to deliberately find a couple of opportunities at work or with the family to admit a mistake and share how you will fix it or prevent it in the future. You will be surprised that the reaction is not as negative as you expect, and you will find this extremely liberating.

2) INTEGRITY:

Integrity simply put is 'always doing the right thing, no matter what the cost'. If there is one thing where flexibility is bad, it is in the area of integrity. We unfortunately see many examples of seemingly successful leaders who do not have integrity and consider it okay. The reality is that any leader who may achieve results and seem to succeed without integrity, sooner or later loses that success. Even if we don't lose it in a material sense, this thing within us called the conscience ends up inflicting punishment that no external agency can.

THOUGHT IN ACTION

Tips for developing integrity:

- The best tip for integrity is to stand tall and never compromise on ethics and morals.
- Daaji, the Heartfulness Guide, suggests that we may think occasionally that everyone is developing correct thinking, right understanding and an honest approach to life. I find that having this thought helps tremendously. After all, when we wish something good for others, we automatically feel inclined to apply it for ourselves.

3) CAPABILITY:

No matter how much integrity you have and how authentic you are, if you simply don't have the capability for whatever role you are performing, you will be unable to earn trust. This applies as much to an accountant, as to a school teacher, as to a CEO, or a lawyer.

Tip for developing capability:

- There are times when you are thrust into a role where you do not yet have the capability. In such cases, being transparent about it (authenticity) and building the capability quickly is a great way to earn trust over time.

4) RELATABILITY:

There is a natural tendency for human beings to trust their own kind. Unfortunately, many times this takes the form of bias and prejudice. Being perceived as 'one of us', however, significantly enhances trust.

Tips to enhance relatability:

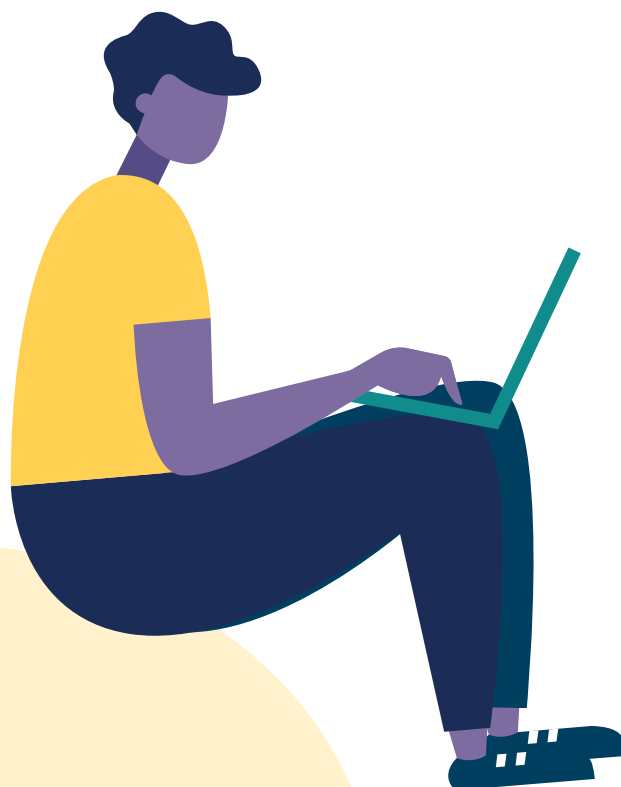
- We cannot change who we are in terms of our race, color, educational background etc., but we can find what we have in common with our circle of interaction and place emphasis on this. Highlighting

what we share versus what is different about us is a great way to be relatable.

- Use language that creates the feeling of being one team or one family. Words are powerful in what they convey directly, but also what they convey subliminally. When you use words like 'we' and 'us' versus 'you' and 'me', you create more relatability and hence trust.

As an exercise, create a list of people you feel are supporters, neutrals and detractors at your workplace or even in your extended family. Against each name, rate on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), how much you think each person trusts you. Do you see a correlation between trust and their support of you? Prioritize 2 or 3 individuals who you think have the most impact on your success. Write down what you can do to bring them from detractor to neutral, and neutral to supporter levels, by applying the above tips for enhancing trust.

In subsequent articles we will look at relationships, dive into behaviors and our own inner state, and see how we can use Heartful leadership to work from the inside out to create better trust, relationships, reputation and, as a result, influence and outcomes.



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*The privilege of a lifetime is
being who you are.*

Joseph Campbell



THE POWER OF *Self-Compassion*

- PART 2 -

DR CHRIS GERMER is a clinical psychologist, meditation practitioner, author and teacher of mindfulness and compassion in psychotherapy and everyday life. He is the co-developer of the Mindful Self-Compassion training program. Here **AMIR IMANI** continues interviewing him during a webinar for mindfulness practitioners.

Q: This practice of self-compassion never ceases to amaze me: how human it is. My own mindfulness or meditation journey started with one of my teachers in graduate school in Toronto walking us through this practice of loving kindness and self-compassion before starting the lecture.

Aha.

Q: I remember those days when he would tell us, "On your way home, when you're sitting in the metro subway, do this instead of just looking around. Get in touch with yourself and get in touch with the person in front of you. Give yourself some love, recognition, and offer them prayers, loving kindness and positive thoughts."

I remember because it was just the crack in the wall; an introduction. I was amazed how he was changing my city. The whole city had become a much softer place to live in. Citizens were warmer towards me, just because of this simple practice of returning to the heart and practicing with intention, practicing this as a skill.

I was reading your book and you said, "Holding oneself in this bubble of kindness is the most difficult thing. It is even more difficult than holding someone else in that bubble." I wonder why. Is this the degree of separation from ourselves? Is this the depth of forgetfulness of ourselves? Even coming back to ourselves and being kind, we feel weak. When we start the practice we feel, "Oh, this is not for me." Why are we like that?

Well, that's a profound question, for which there are so many different answers. I would like to give a superficial answer, and then maybe a profound answer. Actually, the profound answer comes from Hafiz.

The superficial answer is: It's very hard to do anything for ourselves, because our culture says that kindness toward ourselves is selfish. In other words, although compassion is both inner and outer, only outer compassion is right, is legitimate, is okay. The problem is we cannot sustain compassion for others if we don't have compassion for ourselves.

Another reason is that usually our nervous system is in a 'threat' state, and not in a 'care' state. And what self-compassion does is it shifts the physiology from threat to care. So when you're kind to yourself and you're kind to others, starting with kindness to yourself, you're actually

It's very hard to do anything for ourselves, because our culture says that kindness toward ourselves is selfish. In other words, although compassion is both inner and outer, only outer compassion is right, is legitimate, is okay. The problem is we cannot sustain compassion for others if we don't have compassion for ourselves.



moving your physiology from threat to care, as Phil Gilbert from the United Kingdom would say. But it's not possible to be kind to ourselves in a sustained way if we are in a threat state. So we have to figure out how to move from threat to care.

Now comes the deep part, and this is the Hafiz part. Hafiz (translated into English by Daniel Ladinsky) wrote:

Admit something: Everyone you meet, you say to them, "Love me."

Of course you do not do this out loud, otherwise someone would call the cops.

Still though, think about this, this great pull in us to connect.

Why not become the one who lives with a full moon in each eye that is always saying,

with that sweet moon language, what every other eye in this world is dying to hear?

He says, "Admit something: Everyone you meet, you say to them, 'Love me.'" And it's kind of true. You might ask yourself, "Wouldn't it be nice if I were less approval seeking, if I could let go of the wish to be approved of?" But not everyone in the world would like to be less approval seeking. Will it ever work? From birth we have needed to be loved in order to survive; we've wanted to be loved until the day we die.

We want to be loved, but this is the deep part – we have forgotten. And the reason we've forgotten is because it hasn't worked, because our parents and our culture have said, "This is good, that is bad, this is bad, that is good." And at some point we forget that we wish to be loved by everyone we meet. When *we* don't realize that we wish to be loved, we won't see in others that *they* wish to be loved. And when we cannot see this wish to be loved in ourselves and in others the heart remains closed. We are in a shade of fear.

Imagine what it would be like if you woke up in the morning and you knew that just as all beings wish to be loved so do I wish to be loved. Imagine! If you remember Hafiz's words, when you go out in the street you'll see in everybody's eyes the wish to be loved. And what would happen in our hearts? Our hearts would be soft. We would feel care. We would feel kindness. We would not be so afraid and we would not feel so alone.

So this is an insight and a foundation for living our lives in a way in which compassion for ourselves and compassion for others becomes very easy.

Q: So we're actually practicing something that we have forgotten. We are practicing to remember.

To remember our loveliness. To remember our beauty and our wish to be welcomed into this world again and again, as we are.

Q: I do get from people that it sometimes feels very artificial. But it is okay to put intention into remembering, right? We are cultivating a skill.

Yes, in the beginning it feels artificial. When we start to ride a bike it feels artificial, but eventually we can ride a bike very nicely. But we think that if it feels artificial then maybe it is not real. And that's not correct, actually. Sometimes the truth feels like fantasy, you know. Like when people thought that the Earth was flat, that seemed true. Then when people heard the Earth is round, that felt

like fantasy. But actually no, that was more true! It's the same with love. The same with universal love. The same with self-compassion. It's the most natural thing in the world.

What we're learning to do with self-compassion is to remove the obstacles to compassion. And when we remove the obstacles, then natural compassion will flow. This is the path of least resistance. We're learning to give up the resistance to compassion for ourselves, compassion for others.

Q: Wonderful. Removing the barriers to love, Chris, brings me to one of the questions somebody e-mailed me: "In your work you quote Rumi a lot. Can you please tell me, in deepening your understanding of compassion and self-compassion, how much have you been inspired by Rumi?"

When you mention Rumi it brings tears to my eyes, because Rumi knows the path of love and he has found the language for it. Rumi, right now, is the poet. He is the most read poet in the United States. Rumi understands the path of love, without limitation, without ideology, without dogma. He understands. And this compassion, and self-compassion, is the path of love. Not only is it packaged in scientific language, it is very digestible for people in the modern world.

Q: That's the genius of his self too: giving something to people, making such a thing more accessible to people. That is what I love about self-compassion: bringing the centuries-old wisdom into academia, into the business world, into everywhere.

Yes, it's a scientific excuse for love practice!

Q: Okay! Here's another question from a psychotherapist: "How can self-compassion heal a broken heart? How can we use it with our clients? How can we use self-compassion with our clients suffering

from feeling unwanted and rejected in a broken love relationship?"

There are really two questions there. One is: How do we integrate this into psychotherapy and counseling? And the other is: How does it heal a broken heart? I'll try to answer the first one.

So the way to integrate self-compassion into counseling is on three levels:

The first level is the personal embodiment of compassion and self-compassion by the counselor.

The second level is having a compassionate conversation, which literally means radical acceptance of the client as they are, with their suffering, with their grief, with their self-doubt, with their broken heart. Radical acceptance – that's the relationship level.

And then **the third level** is the practices, like the Self-Compassion Break we did, like meditation. So in other words, clients can practice self-compassion for themselves.

But the most important thing is the embodiment by the counselor, because sometimes somebody just wants to be loved, wants to be appreciated before they can even begin to think. Warmth is necessary before they have space to solve their problems. Warmth creates space; space creates warmth. Sometimes we need the warmth to begin to open to what's going on in our lives. So the most important navigation for a counselor is to bring this radical acceptance, this loving kindness and compassion to the person who is suffering. And that cannot be underestimated.

Sometimes therapists feel that the client is suffering too much, or it hurts the therapist too much that the client is suffering. Then we want to stop it by throwing self-compassion exercises at the person to make it go away. This is not compassion; it is not self-compassion. The most important thing is the embodiment in relationship. Then, when the client feels ready and willing, and wants to practice for themselves, they can do it.

And when they do practice for themselves, they are giving themselves the hands that are reaching out to the world to have their needs met – the need to be seen, the need to be heard, the need to be connected, the need to be loved. Then those hands that are reaching out can actually return toward ourselves, so we give ourselves precisely those things that we think we need and look for from others.

This is the great revelation or epiphany of the practice of self-compassion: a lot of our unmet needs can be met by ourselves. We can give ourselves the love we might have been desperately seeking over 5 months, 5 years or 50 years. And when people discover that, self-compassion becomes a permanent part of their lives.

This is amazing. It is like gold right underneath our noses that we have not yet seen. And usually it's a broken heart that makes us see it for the first time, and that's a silver

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lining. Sometimes suffering teaches us about self-compassion. And as a therapist we want to go slow, we want to invite a person into self-compassion, but we want to do it through our compassion.

Q: Awesome. What is the difference between self-compassion and self-confidence? Doesn't self-compassion lead to being careless about others?

There are a lot of important issues in that question. Self-confidence is often related to a sense of self-worth. And our sense of self-worth can come from two main sources.

Typically, self-worth comes from how we compare ourselves to others. So if I am a good student in school then I have high self-worth. But if the same person who is a good student in school is very bad in sports, then they have low self-worth. So, our self-worth often depends on our external circumstances and how we compare ourselves to others.

That's what's called contingent self-worth, based on social comparison.

But there's another kind of self-worth that comes from kindness. And so when I suffer or fail, if I respond with kindness I develop self-worth through love. And this is more stable, more resilient, and you can take it with you everywhere.

Self-worth that depends on social comparison is very fragile. Self-worth that is based on self-kindness and self-compassion is stable.

And when we have self-worth based on self-kindness we are kinder to others. When we have self-worth based on comparison with others, we may do some very nasty things, like bullying people who are below us. We may also become delusional about how great we are.



In other words, when we are completely dependent on external comparisons, we are unkind to other people and delusional about our own worth, whereas when our self-worth comes from kindness to ourselves, that kindness will naturally radiate out to other people. This is what the research shows: that people who are high in self-compassion are actually more compassionate toward others.

And when we have asked the partners of people who are high in self-compassion versus the partners of people who are low in self-compassion, “What is your partner like?” we find that self-compassionate people are not only more compassionate, they’re also less aggressive. They are more likely to collaborate and to compromise, and are generally kinder in relationships. People who are high in self-compassion are kinder in relationships.

There is hope for everybody, because no matter how damaged we are as people from childhood, or whatever, we can all learn self-compassion. This is the good news.

Q: How different is self-compassion from mindfulness? Where do they meet?

I consider self-compassion and mindfulness BFFs – Best Friends Forever. When we are truly mindful, we are also truly full of loving kindness, full of compassion, full of self-compassion. That’s when mindfulness is in full bloom.

But often our mindfulness is not in full bloom; it’s tainted by wishing that things were other than they are. It’s tainted by avoidance; it’s tainted by grasping; it’s tainted by confusion. When we say, “I’m mindful,” usually we’re only a little mindful. Usually our mindfulness is incomplete because of difficult emotions. When that happens, and we would like to increase our mindfulness, we often need to actively bring in compassion training. And this is how it works. So when mindfulness is in full bloom, it’s full of compassion.

We’d like to say, actually, that self-compassion is the emotional attitude of mindfulness; it’s the beating heart

of mindfulness. But if you want to pull it apart and ask, what are some of the technical differences? What we'd like to say is:

Mindfulness is loving awareness of moment-to-moment experience. And compassion is loving awareness of the experiencer of the person.

So usually in the mindfulness tradition and the wisdom tradition, we're breaking things down into moment-to-moment awareness. But sometimes we can't. And when we can't, because the sense of self or the observer is under attack, we need to bring in lots of love and kindness to the observer. For example, you can't be compassionate toward anger or despair. You can only be compassionate toward a person who is suffering from anger or despair. So self-compassion is holding the person.

In a nutshell, what we say is: Sometimes we need to hold ourselves before we can hold our experience. And this is how self-compassion is integrated into mindfulness practice.

Q: Great. Chris, in my experience more and more people complain of not having time to practice. Can you give us some micro self-compassion tools for people who really don't have time?

Yes, here are three micro practices.

Practice One: Ask yourself in a kind way: What do I need? What do I need to comfort, soothe, validate, protect, provide, motivate?

Throughout the world, across cultures, compassion is actually directly experienced through soothing touch and gentle vocalizations. For self-compassion, soothing touch means to find if there is some way that a simple physical touch to your own body – somewhere on your face, your heart, or maybe giving yourself a hug – gives you the direct sense of being comforted and soothed.

Practice Two: Find for yourself a soothing touch, and do that when you're in a moment of struggle.

Practice Three: Tender vocalizations.

So soothing touch, tender vocalizations, and asking yourself, "What do I need?" are three micro practices that anybody can do. At first they might feel artificial, but we say, "Fake it till you make it." First imitation, then realization.

Q: It reminds me of the line by the poet: "You only have to let the soft animal of your body love what it loves."¹

Yes, that's self-compassion. She goes on to say:

*You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.*

And the key word there, in my view, is 'let'. You only have to let the soft animal of your body, because when we're in a state of fear, we don't let anything. Give ourselves permission. The body knows, the heart knows, the mind knows, and then all we have to do is say yes, and we will be healed.

Q: It's so humanizing, this self-compassion practice. Returning to our humanness. And it feels like a very integral part of the mindfulness practice: coming in touch with your humanness. Thank you, Chris. We had a wonderful time with you, illuminating and delightful.

It's just beautiful that you gave me this opportunity, and I hope it's helpful. Thank you.

¹From the poem, *Wild Geese*, by Mary Oliver.

*Before you take any
decision, consider its
effect on the next seven
generations.*

Hopi Proverb



IT CHANGES EVERYTHING



Choosing LIFE

PART 4

In the final part 4 of this interview, **THIERRY CASASNOVAS** continues his advocacy for life. He shares his own journey with **CELINE FRÉSARD**, and the role of fasting in the healing process.



Q: To help us overcome the fears you mentioned earlier, that can be generated in us by certain reactions in our bodies, could you tell us about the stages of fasting and the main symptoms that can occur?

The first principle is: by fasting one becomes a fasting specialist. That is, the knowledge of fasting comes through experience, gradually recognizing symptomatic expressions.

The second principle is: the limit of what is acceptable is set by the person for themselves.

The good news is that once the body is cleansed, the reactions stop. For example, I am used to fasting, so I can do it for days while continuing my activities, and no one will realize that I am operating without water and food. I don't have any painful manifestations like joint pain, because the cleaning work has already been done.

But let's say you are fasting for the first time. You may feel tired, have a headache, a rash of pimples, or other symptoms. At some point you may say to yourself, "No, this is too much, I'm stopping." You will resume your normal food intake but feel bad that you couldn't continue. In fact, stopping is not so bad, because the next



time you will go a little further. This is how the knowledge is gradually built. For me, the key words are listening, feeling and progressiveness.

There is no problem in stopping a fast because you consider the symptoms to be too severe. When you get back to it, your body will immediately take you back to where you stopped. It tells you: "You stopped and I'll take you back." It will put you back in front of the same kinds of symptoms until you have gone through the fear stage, and until you have given your body enough time to clean itself up. So the process will be done, and progressiveness, listening, gentleness, kindness are the keys.

Q: Can you tell us about some physiological processes associated with fasting, such as hormesis, autophagy and the important brain protein Brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF)?

The law of hormesis is the second magnificent law of life. I told you about the first, the law of homeostasis, which says that any system spontaneously returns to a state of equilibrium and will return to it all the more spontaneously if it is placed in a state of rest.

The law of hormesis defines what rest is. It is the proper use of the organism, in other words, when we do not exceed our body's ability to adapt to any situation. It is a totally individual factor, because the upper limit is different for everyone, and this happens in every area of our lives. The law of hormesis tells us: every time we utilize our body without exceeding the adaptive capacity of the individual, the body improves its functioning. Rest is not about leaving your body alone in a dusty corner, it is about utilizing it within the limits of its adaptive capacity. And the law of hormesis tells us that when we extend our body and being as a whole to the limit of what we can tolerate, this is where the gain will be maximum. In these situations, BDNF, which promotes the growth of neural tissue, is



released in response to eustress. Overall it makes you smarter and livelier, by increasing neural pathways.

We are therefore designed to be regularly subjected to adaptive demands, to stresses that stimulate our body's adaptive capacity. The problem comes in today's society, in which we find ourselves in situations that are beyond our ability to adapt. We are often in situations of chronic anxiety, and when we return home we have only one desire, to sink into absolute comfort, and that is atrophy. The right measure is neither in going beyond our limits or into atrophy, but in between, with adapted challenges that push us to the limit of our adaptive capacity without defeating us. This is the law of hormesis that guides any improvement in our functioning. And it is super important.

This is reflected physically and morally. If not challenged, our muscles atrophy. It is automatic. If not challenged regularly in other ways also, within our limits, we automatically regress.

Q: What about autophagy?

Autophagy is one of the wonders of fasting that illustrates the laws of homeostasis and hormesis. When we stop eating, healthy body tissues feed at the expense of degenerative tissues. In times of food scarcity, the healthiest parts of us will feed and let the most degenerate parts starve to death. It is a regulatory process in which what is not functional will disappear, allowing for renewal. Even if a part of us dies, the constant cell renewal will create new cells and tissues that will be healthy. So the process of autophagy is the normal renewal of the organism, where the healthy feeds at the expense of the unhealthy. It is the evacuation of waste, the elimination, renewal and permanent rejuvenation of the organism that takes place particularly during periods of rest and fasting. This is when autophagy is at its peak.

Q: The body gets rid of its own toxins, waste and tumors?

Exactly. Waste is what cannot be used by the body, so it will be disposed of by the body. On the other hand, the body feeds on its fats and, since food resources are limited

The process of autophagy is the normal renewal of the organism, where the healthy feeds at the expense of the unhealthy. It is the evacuation of waste, the elimination, renewal and permanent rejuvenation of the organism that takes place particularly during periods of rest and fasting.

This is when autophagy is at its peak.

while we are fasting, the energy from these fats will be directed to the healthiest cells so that they replicate themselves, and the unhealthy cells will simply die.

Q: So should we wait until we are sick before we start fasting?

As I understand it, disease is the signal that we have overtaken the body's adaptive mechanisms. So the intelligent solution would be to feed the adaptive systems so that we do not get sick.

Unfortunately, for many of us, our culture does not invite us to consider our lifestyle in this way. Sometimes we have to fall sick in order to change our habits. It doesn't have to be this way, but it is often a powerful motivation. However, supporting a healthy lifestyle can begin at an early age, and I am very happy when parents contact me and tell me that they have understood the importance of feeding their children well.

Q: You mean everyone can fast, including children and the elderly?

Anyone can fast, as long as it is freely chosen; otherwise it is food deprivation and abuse. Children often spontaneously feel the need, especially when they are sick, so you can tell them, "Look, there's a chance you're not hungry and that's normal. This is what's going on in your body, so it is not the time to eat." This will give them a knowledge

that will accompany them throughout their life – to listen to their bodies' natural needs.

The main thing is to listen to yourself and respect yourself. When it gets too difficult, just stop. It is all about feeling. For some it will be a few hours and for others a few weeks. It depends on the person. The best rule to make sure you don't make mistakes is to go slowly and gradually. If you can't swim, you don't jump into a big pool without a float, or you risk drowning. You start by going into the small pool where you can touch the bottom, and then you experiment slowly. With fasting it's the same. If you've never fasted, start by delaying the first meal. For example, you may wait one hour before eating breakfast, then another, and eventually you end up not eating until noon. You have done what is called an intermittent fast and that is perfect.

Gradually, you will delay lunch and make only one meal a day. And the day you feel really comfortable with that, you'll be fasting till the evening and you'll have done 24 hours of fasting. This is how, by progressing slowly, you get to know your body with peace of mind, to discover its reactions, how it works, and then you are a winner.

At this point you have experience, and you have built knowledge that no longer depends on an external authority but on what is happening inside. You are free. You feel a total freedom, because you have met life.

Letter to My Younger Self

In 2015, Erick Joseph filmed **CHARLES EISENSTEIN** in a short interview for a younger audience. Charles wrote a short essay to accompany the film, which we have reproduced here.

Dear self,

Your secret, lonely knowledge is true. Despite all you have been told, the world that has been offered to you as normal is anything but normal. It is a pale semblance of the intimacy, connection, authenticity, community, joy and grief that lie just beneath the surface of society's habits and routines.



Dear self,

You have a magnificent contribution to make to the more beautiful world your heart knows is possible. It

may not make you famous, but you have an important gift, an indispensable gift, and it demands you to apply it to something you care about. Unless

you do, you will feel like you aren't really living your life. You will live the life someone pays you to live, caring about things you are paid to care about.

You can make a different choice.



Dear self,

Do not believe the cynical voice, masquerading as the realistic voice that says that nothing much can change. That voice will call your dreams by many names: naïve, unrealistic, immature, and irresponsible. Trust your knowledge that the world can be different, can be better. You needn't sell out and live a life complicit in maintaining the status quo.

Dear self,

You carry a deep yearning to contribute to the healing of the world and fulfillment of its possibilities. This is your deepest desire, and if you abandon it you will feel like a ghost inhabiting the mere shell of a life. Instead, trust that desire and follow it toward whatever service it calls you to, however small and insignificant it might seem.



Dear self,

The most reliable guide to choice is to follow whatever makes you feel happy and excited to get out of bed in the morning. Life is not supposed to be a grim slog of discipline and sacrifice. You practiced for such a life in school, tearing yourself out of bed for days of tedium, bribed with trivial rewards called grades, intimidated by artificial consequences, proceeding through a curriculum designed by faraway authorities, asking permission to use the toilet. It is time to undo those habits. Let your compass instead be joy, love, and whatever makes you feel alive.



IT CHANGES EVERYTHING



Dear self,

When you follow your passion and come fully alive, your choices will feel threatening to anyone who abides in the dominant story of normal. You will be reminding them of the path they didn't follow, and awaken in them the suppressed yearning to devote their gifts to something beautiful. Rather than face that grief, they may suppress it – and suppress you as well.

Dear self,

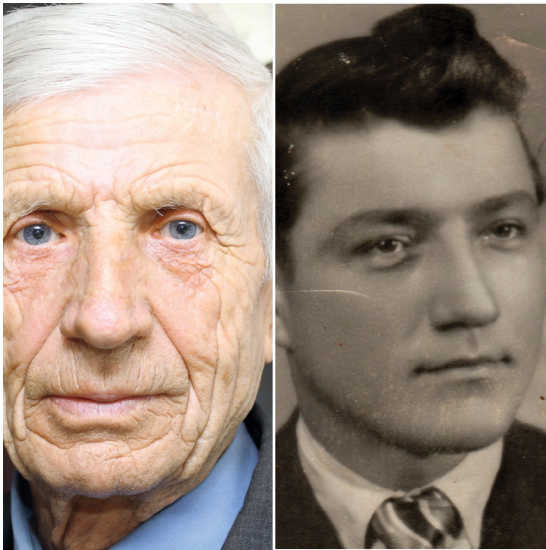
At a certain moment it will become necessary for you to go on a journey. It isn't to escape forever. It is to find yourself outside of whomever your conditioning trained you to be. You must put yourself in a situation where you don't know who you are anymore. This is called an initiation. Who you were becomes inoperative; then, who you will be can emerge.



Dear self,

Powerful forces will attempt to make you conform to society's normality. These will take the form of social pressure, parental pressure, and very likely, economic pressure. When you encounter them, please understand that they are giving you the opportunity to define yourself. When push comes to shove, who are you?





Dear self,

The old maps do not apply in these times of transition. Even if you try to follow them, even if you accept their bribes and heed their threats, there is no guarantee you'll reap the promised rewards. The university graduates washing dishes and the PhDs driving taxis attest to this.

We are entering new territory. Trust your guidance. It is okay to make mistakes, because in uncharted territory even the wrong path is part of finding the right path.

Dear self,

On this path, you are sure to get lost. But you are held, watched, and guided by a vast organic intelligence. It will become visible when things fall apart – as surely they must, in the transition between worlds. You will stumble, only to find overlooked treasure beneath your feet. You'll despair of finding the answer – and then the answer will find you. Breakdown clears the space for synchronicity, for help unimagined and unearned.



Dear self, v

None of this advice can be sustainably implemented by a heroic effort on your part.

You need help. Seek out other people who reinforce your perception that a more beautiful world is possible, and that life's first priority is not security, but rather to give of your gifts, to play, to love and be loved, to learn, to explore.

When those people (your tribe) are in crisis, you can hold them in the knowing of what you know. And they can do the same for you. No one can do this alone.

REJOINING THE GREAT CONVERSATION:

Reconnecting with
the soul of the world

LLEWELLYN VAUGHAN-LEE delivers a heartfelt plea to all of us to open our hearts and care for our Mother Earth, value her sacredness, and reconnect with her soul.

Spiritual Activism is an emerging field that calls for a spiritual response to our present global crisis – to our present social divisiveness and ecological devastation, to our self-destructive identification with an old story of separation rather than embracing the living story of life's interdependent oneness.



We are present at a moment in our shared destiny when the Earth is crying out to us to help her in this time of crisis that is destroying her ecosystem, the fragile web of life that supports her multihued unity. All around us are what Thich Nhat Hanh calls the “bells of mindfulness” – we can hear them ringing in the unprecedented species depletion (such as the recent awareness of what is called the ‘insect Armageddon’, with a 45-75% loss of insect biomass), the oceans filling with plastic at a rate unfathomable a few decades ago, and accelerating climate change; all with unforeseen consequences. And, on a different level, though just as painful, is the loss of wildness and wonder, a diminishing sense of the sacred that nourishes our souls.

Many of us are responding with action and ideas, even as our governments and corporations – with their focus on economic growth and materialism – are unable or unwilling to make this a real priority. This was forcefully articulated at the recent UN Climate Change COP24 Conference by the 16-year-old activist Greta Thunberg, who spoke truth to power when she said: “We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again.”

You only speak of green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake. You are not mature enough to tell it like it is. Even that burden you leave to us children. But I don't care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet. ...

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFkQSGyeCWg>)



This last sentence brought tears to my eyes, as my soul heard her speak about real care for the Earth – for this living, beautiful being who has given us life, who has nourished us with her endless generosity, even as we have abused and desecrated her, raped and pillaged her body, which our culture regards greedily as just a ‘resource’ for our endless use and abuse.

But behind Greta’s phrase, “the living planet,” is a deeper truth that calls out to our forgetfulness. As was known to the ancients and to indigenous peoples, our Earth is a being with a soul as well as a body, what in the West we called the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, and what the Kogi in the Sierra Nevada in Colombia call *Aluna*, the spiritual intelligence within nature. Until we recognize, remember, and reconnect with the spiritual nature of the Earth, the primal intelligence within all life, we will be walking in the darkness of our forgetfulness, unable to find the way to work together with her, to start to heal and transform the living oneness to which we all belong.

Every butterfly, every bee, every waterfall, every dream we have, is a part of this living, spiritual being. She is ancient beyond our understanding, even as she is crying out at this moment. The greatest unspoken tragedy of this time is that we have forgotten her living sacred presence, and this is the silent censorship that has clear-cut our consciousness. In the West, when the early Christians violently banished paganism, they burned the books that understood her magical nature;¹ and now, as the web of life is being torn apart, we do not even know how to respond. We do not know how to access her wisdom, how to return to being a part of the great conversation that belongs to all of life. We remain stranded on the desolate shores of materialism, as in a supermarket where the shelves are increasingly empty.

Spiritual Activism is an emerging field that calls for a spiritual response to our present global crisis – to our present social divisiveness and ecological devastation, to our self-destructive identification with an old story of

It does not need governments or big organizations; just individuals whose hearts are open and who have heard the cry of the Earth. Within our own being we can make this connection, and so help to bring the sacred alive again in our own daily life and the life of the Earth.

separation rather than embracing the living story of life's interdependent oneness. Yes, we desperately need to reduce carbon emissions and pesticides, to stop turning rainforests into ranchland or palm oil plantations. But there is also a call to reconnect with the sacred within creation, with the spiritual lifeblood of the planet. Otherwise we will just be continuing the same one-sided conversation that has caused this devastation. We need to work together with the Earth, to include her wonder and wisdom. We need to reconnect with her soul.

And this is a work that we each can do. It does not need governments or big organizations; just individuals whose hearts are open and who have heard the cry of the Earth. Within our own being we can make this connection, and so help to bring the sacred alive again in our own daily life and the life of the Earth. There are many different ways to reconnect. In a recent book, *Spiritual Ecology: 10 Practices to Reawaken the Sacred in Everyday Life*, I outline a number

of simple spiritual practices, from walking in a sacred manner, to cooking with love and cleaning with awareness.² Whatever our practice, this foundational work is not complicated, but rather simply requires our attention, real mindfulness. It can empower us to make a real contribution to enable humanity to rejoin the great conversation, the sacred relationship with the Earth that was part of the Original Instructions given to our ancestors.

The Earth will continue. We are now living through the sixth mass extinction of species in her history. It is our shared future that is uncertain: whether we will keep to our ancient promise to witness her wonder and beauty, honor her sacred ways; or whether we will continue our present path, stumbling through an increasingly soulless wasteland, caught in consumerism, until the sea levels rise, the air becomes too toxic, the oceans too acidic, our souls too desolate. Again, in the words of the young activist Greta Thunberg, "We have run out of excuses and we are running out of time." But she also said, "Change is coming." The real question is whether we are open to being a part of real change – for hearts and hands to help the Earth, for our souls to reconnect with the magic and mystery of her living being.

¹ Beginning in the fourth century, the early Christians banned or burned up to 90% of pagan or pre-Christian writings. Of some pagan philosophers only fragments now remain (Catherine Nixey, *The Darkening Age: The Christian Destruction of the Classical World*).

² The chapters 'Walking', 'Simplicity' and 'Cleaning' have been published in previous issues of Heartfulness Magazine.

be inspired!





*Yesterday is
but today's memory,
and tomorrow is
today's dream.*

Kahlil Gibran

YOGIC PSYCHOLOGY

PART 4 - SMRITI

In this series of articles, **DAAJI** explains the fundamentals of yogic psychology, with its foundation in the original balanced state and the various mental modifications, some of which help us maintain balance and well-being, and some of which take us away from balance. **DAAJI** gives us guidance and solutions to create mental well-being through yogic practices. In this fourth article of the series, he explores the fifth *vritti* described in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: memory, known in Yoga as *smriti*.

THE YOGIC SCIENCE OF MEMORY

So far we have explored the four *vrittis* of *pramana*, *viparyaya*, *vikalpa* and *nidra*. Now we will turn our attention to the fifth, *smriti* or memory.

VRITTIS

Instinctive
thought patterns
or tendencies

Pramana – means of right or valid knowledge

Viparyaya – false or wrong knowledge

Vikalpa – fantasy, imagination

Nidra – sleep

Smriti – memory

KLESHAS

Colorings or
impurities in the
thought patterns

Avidya – ignorance, veiling

Asmita – mine-ness, egotism

Raga – attachment, addiction

Dvesha – aversion, repulsion

Abhinivesha – clinging to life, fear of death

VIKSHEPAS

Obstacles and
distractions

Vyadhi – disease, illness

Styana – mental laziness, dullness

Samsaya – doubt, indecision

Pramada – carelessness, negligence, haste

Alasya – laziness, sloth

Avirati – lack of abstaining,

absence of non-attachment

Bhranti-Darshana – false perception

Alabdha-Bhumikatva – failing to attain
stages on the journey

Anavasthitattva – inability to maintain
the stage, instability

VIGHNAS

Disturbances
resulting from
the obstacles

Duhkha – pain, mental and physical

Daurmanasya – despair, depression

Angam-Ejayatva – trembling of the body,
nervousness

Svasa – inhalation (irregular)

Prasvasa – exhalation (irregular)

BE INSPIRED

Try to imagine life without memory. How would you learn from mistakes? You would not remember how to do all the things that make up your daily routine, such as how to make breakfast, where to go to work etc., and you would not be able to build relationships with the people you cherish and love, because there would be no shared memories, and no fond nostalgia. Your chance of survival would be seriously compromised, because you would repeat dangerous things that put you at risk, such as swimming in a rip, eating a poisonous fruit, or putting your hand in fire. You would not be able to learn a profession or trade, because you would not remember things: how would a doctor be able to practice without remembering human anatomy or the diagnoses of diseases?

There is no doubt that the fifth *vritti*, memory or *smriti*, has profound practicality and survival value. Even single-celled organisms without brains or central nervous systems, like amoebae, are able to learn responses in experiments, exhibiting memory in consciousness. Memory is a primitive function of consciousness, fundamental to our existence on Earth; we remember in order to survive.

At the same time, our memories can hold us back and weigh us down significantly. There are two main reasons. The first reason is the emotional association we give to memory – the ‘charge’ – as we accumulate experiences, because of the ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ we attach to them, for example, “I hate thunderstorms,” “I love picnics,” “All teenagers are rude.” We have an experience and then we extrapolate from that to generalize about the whole. The second is the fact that we create habits or behavioral tendencies because of those associations. While habits can be useful, they limit us. We restrict ourselves by the cognates of the past. As a result, effectively, the past interferes in the present.

For example, if a person had a traumatic experience while swimming as a child, he may fear getting into water for the rest of his life, and it may carry over into future lives also. If a young girl associates the smell of lavender with her mother, she may feel safe and happy with every woman

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who wears lavender oil or perfume she meets as an adult. If a boy’s tantrums successfully got him the attention he wanted when he was small, he may continue to create drama in his relationships as an adult in order to demand attention. Our patterns very easily become fixed, and most of them are unconscious.

PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS

In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali describes the fifth *vritti* as follows:

1.11: Anubhuta vishaya asampramoshah smritih

Memory is when the *vrittis* of perceived
subjects do not slip away.
Instead they form impressions,
which can come back again to consciousness.
Memory is the recalling of past experiences
through these impressions that have settled
in the field of consciousness.

Creating memory is the laying down of experience in the form of vibrational patterns in the field of consciousness. These are known as impressions or *samskaras* in Yoga. Re-membling is the recalling of those stored memories.



Both these processes are happening continuously. Constantly we are referring our present feelings and experiences to cognates from the past. So the past is being projected into the present and coloring our experience.

Patanjali says that the *vrittis* can either be colored (*klishtha*) or uncolored (*aklishtha*), that is, either impure or pure. And this is so true of memories. For example, in *The River of Consciousness*, Oliver Sacks recounts documented examples of how we mis-remember situations and events, based on many factors, including the merging together of various memories over time, our emotional colorings, and what other people tell us of past events. In fact, there are all sorts of colorings. We build up a library of impressions that interact with each other, creating real and imaginary memories. Our memories have become colored. Gradually, over time, the mind becomes like a painter's canvas that has layer upon layer of painting on it, all mixed up together. There is no longer purity or clarity in the mind.

Compare this with small children, whose minds are still fresh and clear. They are so full of life, so full of wonder, and so open in their approach to the world. They are not bogged down by memory. There is nothing tainting their

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BE INSPIRED

worldview. It is for this reason that Yoga values so much the regulation of the mind through meditative practices and the removal of impressions. The whole effort involved in Yoga is to remove the obstacles, the things that bind us and hold us down, so that we become like small children – and that is especially true of removing the emotional charge of memories.

Patanjali also says:

4.6: Tatra dhyana jam anasayam

Of all the types of consciousness that we see,
only the original state that is uncovered in meditation
is free from latent impressions and desires.

It exists without any support,
without motivation – it is desireless.

This original state is the goal of Yoga: we aspire to uncover what existed before creation. It is the state of *Samadhi*; a state without thought. It existed before we created our own inner ecology over time. When we are in *Samadhi*, we are totally in the present. There is no thinking, only witnessing. Meditation is, in effect, the letting go of thinking. This is such an important concept, which is at the very crux of Yoga, and it highlights the central role of meditation in Yoga. In meditation we learn how to let go of thinking and only witness. More about this later.

This is why Yoga can never be associated with any belief system or religion – because all religions require language, dogma and belief, whereas the original state is beyond all these.

Patanjali continues:

4.9: Jati desha kala vyavahitanam api anantaryam smriti samskarayoh eka rupatvat

Since memory and deep impressions (*samskaras*)
have the same form, the relationship of cause and effect
continues to be played out, even though there might
be a gap in location, time and state of life.

In other words, there is continuity. We may die and be reborn into another body, at another time, in another place, but that is only the death of the physical body – the subtle bodies and the causal body carry on. And the subtle bodies carry the impressions with them around the soul from one life to the next. That is why in research studies done by psychiatrists like Dr Brian Weiss, people remember things from their past lives. And it is also why impressions from our past lives can affect us subconsciously in the present, without us even being aware.

It is only once we transcend the mind in *Samadhi*, through Yoga, that there is no longer any need for rebirth. We are then liberated – because there are no more desires to be fulfilled. We have reached the original state beyond creation.

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REMOVING THE ROOT CAUSE

4.10: *Tasam anaditvam cha ashisah nityatvat*

There is no beginning
to this process of deep impressions,
as the desire to live and be happy is eternal.

Each new experience is built upon the tendencies laid down by past experiences. There is no beginning to desire and the wish for happiness. Try to witness your desires. If you watch them, and are alert to the way they affect your behaviour, you will soon understand why it is so useful to remove them from your field of consciousness. The good news is that there is an end to desires, through the practices of Yoga. As energy is gradually released from your desires – by removing the vibrational knots or complexities in the field of consciousness – it becomes available to help you soar higher and higher. And as more and more of the knots of desire are removed, your energy will be able to soar high enough for you to reach escape velocity.

4.11: *Hetu phala ashraya alambana
samgrihitatvat esam abhave tad abhavah*

As the knots of energy of impressions
are held together by cause and effect,
the effects disappear with the causes.

What does Patanjali mean here? Think of the effects he speaks about as your emotional reactions. You may be fearful, angry, jealous, anxious, self-pitying or resentful, or you may be kind, compassionate, loving, generous and forgiving. But these are only the effects of underlying causes that exist within your system. What are the underlying causes? They are the *samskaric* impressions in your field of consciousness.

It is important to understand that the effects cannot be removed by trying to change the effects. If you fell a tree but leave the roots intact, most trees will regrow from the roots. Similarly, if you try to change outer behaviors without removing the underlying *samskaras*, the behaviors will



re-emerge as soon as the conditions are conducive. Trying to control your emotions is a good start – it is good to be aware and willing to change behavioral patterns, such as learning to manage anger. But it is still tackling the problem from the cosmetic and superficial level. That is why the medical approach to mental illness has limitations, and why we have a global epidemic of depression – because medication and behavioral changes can only attempt to manage symptoms, the effects. They cannot address the root cause. They need something more. Hence we require something like the Heartfulness practices, which work deeply at the innermost level, removing the root cause itself.

BE INSPIRED

For permanent change, the root *samskaras* or energy knots have to be removed. If you go on only controlling emotions, they will continue to accumulate in your subconscious, and you will end up with a pressure cooker inside you ready to explode. Heartfulness practice does the opposite; it releases the effects by removing the root cause.

*4.12: Atita anagatam svarupatah asti
adhva bheda dharmanam*

Past and future exist in the present,
but they are not experienced in the present
because they have different characteristics;
they are on different planes.

Generally we are unconsciously influenced by the past and anticipating the future, but if our consciousness is pure we see eternity as it is – eternally in this moment. Most of us are limited to the thin film of consciousness that we use, and as a result we do not understand the relationship between past, present and future; between subconscious, conscious and superconscious.

In Heartfulness meditation, we learn how to expand consciousness and make it infinite. Especially with the aid of Yogic Transmission, what was earlier subconscious, i.e. below consciousness, is illuminated into consciousness. What was superconscious, i.e. above consciousness, is also illuminated into consciousness. No longer do we need to compartmentalize these three parts of the consciousness spectrum and be so unaware of what is happening within us.

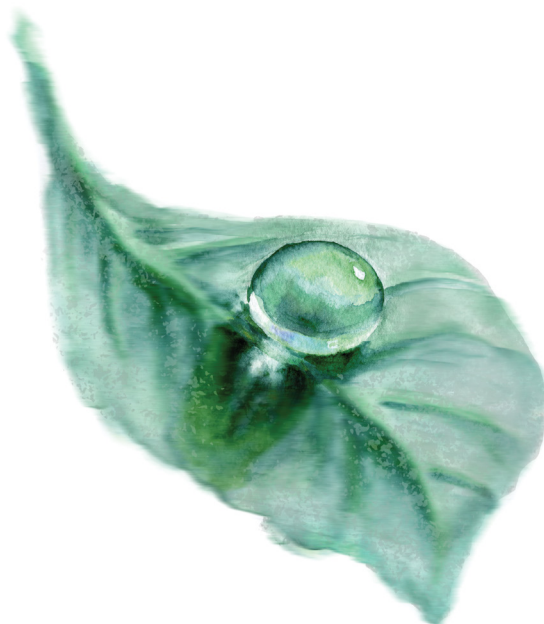
Of course the autonomic functions of the mind that allow us to breathe, to digest, for the heart to pump blood, and to process all the stimuli that we take in, still go on unconsciously, and we want them to. But the emotions related to memory can be removed, and behavioral change can also then take effect in a real way.

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THE WITNESS

Once our 'likes' and 'dislikes' are adjusted, through the meditative practices and lifestyle changes of Heartfulness, we learn how to witness instead of observe, without interference. Observation is influenced by the pre-judgment of conditioning, of previous information, because it involves impressions. There is constant interference. This is what is referred to in Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. As observers, we are always involved, as our likes and dislikes draw our observation in the first place, and based on them we judge and interfere. Observation is never simply passive or receptive, but goal-oriented, as in the scientific method where we start with hypotheses – our own preconceptions based on observation. The observing mind seeks an outcome. The observing mind can never be passive or disinterested.

Compare this with witnessing, which is neutral. As witnesses, we are not participants. We are not involved. We have no vested interest yet we are fully alert. When we witness we



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don't interfere with things, expect or impose, and so we do not create *samskaras* in ourselves or in others.

When we witness, we still have thoughts, but we do not judge them or fight with them. They are simply like clouds passing by. Who is this witness? It is not the mind. It is that inner dweller, the soul.

The Buddha expressed this idea of the witness in a slightly different way. He used the term for meditation – right memory. You can also call it uncolored memory. There is no bias to it. Right memory is truthful. It is freeing. It is authentic. All this comes from meditation where we learn to simply witness and allow everything to surface and leave.

The result? Clarity of mind and the associated ability to discern and make wise decisions. To arrive at that state we need to journey through the Heart Region, and master



Cleaning is simple and effective, and has revolutionized Yoga since it was first utilized in the 1940s by Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur. It is Cleaning that removes the emotional charge. It is Cleaning that disentangles the past influences. It is Cleaning that allows us to redesign our destiny.

the emotions associated with the five elements of the chakras in the Heart. In this process, all the samskaric complexities and impurities associated with those emotions unravel and dissipate. We arrive at a state of clarity and authenticity.

LETTING GO

Accumulating memories is like accumulating material possessions. Memories are our mental possessions, and those we hold dear are like our most precious material possessions. Generally they are much harder to let go of than material possessions. We allow them to define us and our identity. Our ego becomes entangled in them.

Are we willing to drop memories? What are we dropping anyway? It is not all the information associated with each memory but the emotional interference, the knot in the energy field, so that the charge is diffused. When the past is not continuously there, the uncolored present can be there.

How is this possible? One of the most potent practices ever conceived in yogic psychology is the Heartfulness Cleaning. Its purpose is to remove the impressions – to purify the field of consciousness of all the complexities and impurities that have accumulated. Impressions are removed daily from the field of consciousness, the subtle body, using the power of thought, just like dirt is removed from the physical body when taking a bath. It also works for the first limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga – *Yama*, to remove unwanted tendencies. The possibility of removal of tendencies does exist, otherwise why would Patanjali include the limb of *Yama* in Ashtanga Yoga? I am making this remark because some *sannyasis* feel that it is impossible to remove *samskaras*.

Cleaning is simple and effective, and has revolutionized Yoga since it was first utilized in the 1940s by Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur. It is Cleaning that removes the emotional charge. It is Cleaning that disentangles the past influences. It is Cleaning that allows us to redesign our destiny.

IMPLICIT & EXPLICIT MEMORY, ILLUSION AND TRUTH

One of the more interesting findings in neuroscience is about the way memories are formed. Scientists talk about implicit memory, which forms unconsciously, and explicit memory, which forms consciously. When we react emotionally in a situation, e.g. out of fear, it is usually very rapid, bypassing the cognitive cortical centers of the brain. Our system utilizes other nerve pathways, such as from the heart neurons via the pneumogastric (tenth) cranial nerve to subcortical structures like the cerebellar tonsil. The heart's electromagnetic pulses also rapidly influence the whole body and beyond. So when there is a feeling or emotional response involved in the laying down of memory, or in the retrieval of a memory, then we use implicit memory, which cannot be managed or removed through cognitive mental processes, because the memory pathways do not go through the cognitive centers. It is a different type of memory.

It can, however, be dealt with by the heart, especially through the practices of meditation on the heart and cleaning of the heart, because the heart can respond instantaneously. Only through heart-based practices can we learn to master emotions and arrive at uncolored 'real' memory.

In *The River of Consciousness*, Oliver Sacks explains that hallucination and imagination involve the same memory pathways in the brain as 'real' perception does. Neuroscientists have so far concluded that there is no mechanism in the mind for ensuring reality and truthfulness. So in that sense the mind is amoral, because the 'guiding factor' or conscience to determine what is right (*pramana*) and what is wrong (*viparyaya*), what is real and what is imagination (*vikalpa*), is not found in neuroscience. Memory is constructed in a highly subjective way. What we feel to be true is as much dependent on imagination as on the senses, because events and situations are experienced. Subjectivity is built into the very nature of memory. And memory arises not only from experience but also from the interchange of many minds.

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So where does reality come from? Where does truth come from? Again, we come to the role of the heart. Through Heartfulness practices we experience the heart as the subtle organ that tells us what is real and not real, what is right and wrong, etc. The inference of this is very profound: by listening to the heart we discover the voice of conscience becoming clearer, so that we can discern and discriminate with ease. But there is one important caveat – this only works when the heart is pure, when the field of consciousness is pure.

Ultimately, the more we are able to purify our consciousness, by removing the *samskaras* at the root of mental complexities, the more likely we are to have clear, uncolored memory and hence a healthy mind, an overall sense of well-being and a purposeful destiny.



the · nv · s · ble

ALICE RUSSO shares her journey of letting her heart guide her life.

I have made the awesome realization of having reached a place where it is no longer primarily my mind influencing me, but my heart influencing my mind. And this seems to be the safest, most secure way of life. For a long time I have understood that the mind needs to be surrendered to the spirit, and it has always been my intention as a woman of faith. But I suppose the subconscious mind was still preventing that friendship, merge, oneness of mind and heart, practically and experientially. It was always a 'coming back' to the truth of grace with effort, rather than something automatic or abiding.

*There is no worldly
sense of security that
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by the heart.*

My life experiences have repeatedly brought me to the edge of a physical sense of safety and well-being, with no choice but to take a leap of faith in being upheld by the Invisible. Time after time I have found myself to be completely supported, aided, and provided for. These challenges have exercised and strengthened my belief, and proven the complete reliability of our Source. I had always been brought back to a sense of solid ground under my feet for stretches of rest. I now feel as though I am safely established in a life of faith alone, living willingly and happily with a moment-to-moment dependence on the Invisible.

The mind needs to know the truth that is contained within the heart, but there is often a disconnect because the old, unconscious, habitual patterns of the mind keep us separated and limited. We see a certain experience and we auto-react and define it as trouble, so we take action to try to rectify the problem. We end up in a life of struggle, continuously striving to putting out fires, rather than resting in the understanding that we can just walk right through them untouched.

There is no problem; there is only something the mind is defining as a problem.

This is where the uninhibited heart will leap out and adjust that auto-thought if the heart has the dominant role.

The heart has always been there, ready and waiting. It's the clutter, the dross, and the unconscious, subconscious patterns and impressions that block our liberation. Although I have been a dedicated seeker for many years, it is without doubt the help of Transmission in the Heartfulness way that is clearing the path to my heart, allowing that mind-heart connection. There is nothing in the world more important than this. There is no worldly sense of security that tops a life governed by the heart.



taste of life



*What the world needs is more
conscious movement, more action.*

B.K.S. Iyengar



Cultural Identity

An Art Essay by the Joliet Mural Artists

KATHLEEN SCARBORO is one of a school of artists who have developed the 'Joliet style' of mural painting in Joliet, Illinois, near Chicago. Here she shares their story, and the importance of public art in bringing a sense of cultural identity and community through environmental enhancement.

Even a brief look at art history illustrates the vital link between artists and the societies they represent. We understand diverse civilizations by studying and enjoying the great works of art and architecture they created. It is a relatively recent phenomenon, primarily in western countries, that so many contemporary artists find themselves outside society, unable to assume their role as voices for the beliefs and aspirations of the populations to which they belong.

All human beings, rich or poor, need aspirations to give meaning to their lives. The role of art is to take these aspirations from a latent impulse and translate them into physical form to be shared and used as a source of continued inspiration for all.



Art has never appeared less necessary, and the artist has never been so alienated from society, but this unnatural situation is beginning to change. Starting in the 1960s, community-based public artists worked in cities to reunite artists and communities.

For the Friends of Community Public Art (FCPA), in Joliet, Illinois, a not-for-profit association, the goal is to revive public art by renewing and revitalizing links among local artists, civic and political figures, and the people of the city. Local authorities support the association, as they see the need to invest in public art as a way to express the ideals of the community and enrich its environment.

FCPA is dedicated to reflecting the entire community of Joliet, including its economic, ethnic and racial diversity. The organization's founders and members believe art is the ideal vehicle to transform society from within. Without this projection by society into the future, humanity could remain stuck in material struggle, never going beyond the most basic physical level of existence.

Martin Luther King's simple and unforgettable statement, "I have a dream," embodies this concept. Humanity advances by dreaming itself forward, and art is one of the most efficient vectors of this phenomenon. The existence of art and its support by the population are symbols of the vitality of the inner impetus toward fulfillment within a society. All human beings, rich or poor, need aspirations to give meaning to their lives. The role of art is to take these aspirations from a latent impulse and translate them into physical form to be shared and used as a source of continued inspiration for all.



The unflagging efforts of FCPA to raise the level of cultural awareness in Joliet have been fruitful. Great progress has been made between artists and the public. This new partnership has allowed the association's artists to learn and apply basic principles needed to promote the appreciation and material support of the visual arts. People have to identify with the artwork for a sense of belonging to develop. This sense of belonging and identification is vital. The aspirations of the public – its most productive and positive aspects – must be represented so that the desire for ownership can emerge.

Another essential element in the nurturing of public art is the quality of conception and execution. Through FCPA, mural participants received a conceptual and technical education that guaranteed the quality of content and expertise of execution. What was created can be considered a school of painting, the result of constant communication among a number of artists, all striving to collaborate at the highest possible level.



The 'Joliet style' is as recognizable and definable as other schools of painting in the history of art, where artists grouped by an affinity of ideas influence each other. In Joliet, the shared workspace has not only been the interior of a studio, but also the city itself. The artists have had the exciting experience of sharing their discoveries and efforts with the community in a very immediate fashion. The public has been both spectator and actor in a contemporary art movement while it was happening.

Joliet was ripe for a new vision of itself. Most people thought Joliet was not a very interesting place. Because of a lack of knowledge about its history, the city's image had suffered, so it was more a place where one ends up rather than a place one would choose to live. We as artists began researching the city's history, and discovered an endless number of dramatic and exciting stories concerning its past. These stories served as raw material for the elaborate works of public art. The community's cultural identity started appearing on the exterior walls of the urban environment. The stories the city had to tell were exclusively its own.

TASTE OF LIFE

The development of public art in Joliet has spurred a profound transformation in the local mentality; one that is rapidly evolving. The opportunity for people to contemplate their history and heritage in a lively, colorful visual form has been educational. People are often surprised that their personal histories can serve as subject matter for a work of art and that people like themselves who are willing to get involved in the daily life of their communities can leave their mark on history. They realize they can make a difference if they see themselves as capable of making positive changes. And they start to understand that our urban environment is our collective work, reflecting what we are and how we see ourselves.

Mural paintings, sculptures and mosaics have an overall effect that alters our existence in a positive way, just as everyone who puts a flowerpot on a windowsill makes a small, yet appreciable, gesture toward making our daily lives more poetic.





Mural paintings, sculptures and mosaics have an overall effect that alters our existence in a positive way, just as everyone who puts a flowerpot on a windowsill makes a small, yet appreciable, gesture toward making our daily lives more poetic. As attention to the environment awakens, and we see not only our homes but also our neighborhoods and cities as belonging to us, then a great transformation can take place. As the city is 'dressed up', we start seeing ourselves differently, too. The exterior environment reveals how we feel about ourselves. If we make efforts to enhance our urban surroundings, we give form to our desire for inner refinement. As we reflect our environments back

to the community, it creates and reinforces a sense of pride and dignity of belonging to a special, unique place.

If FCPA has been given space and material support to create lasting works of public art in Joliet, we can assume that other cities will recognize a need for similar programs. All it takes is a few enlightened and devoted minds to put the wheels in motion. It is our hope that Joliet's example will inspire other cities to awaken their innate need for environmental enhancement and education through the revelation of cultural identity.

Potato Treasure

Lessons from the Garden

ALANDA GREENE continues her personal understanding of life from her experiences in the garden. This time, potatoes shed light on consciousness and the ever-expanding need for authenticity and self-acceptance in following life's path.

This year the potatoes are abundant, their size a healthy medium-large. The two previous years gave a harvest of fewer and smaller ones. I note my pleasure to again find abundance in both quantity and size. Not just for the harvest's productivity, but because it confirms my own experience and the uniqueness of this particular garden's ways.

Potatoes are generally an easy vegetable to grow. As a child, I learned how to space and plant them from my dad as we worked together in the backyard. This current hillside garden was created from depleted land that had been forest, vastly different to the deep prairie loam of that childhood place. Still, eventually the potatoes grew here and, as the soil improved, so did the harvest.



One day, however, I read an article about the proper way to grow potatoes and I resolved to follow the advice of knowledgeable gardeners. The harvest wasn't so good after the first year of using their suggestions, but I gave it another try in case I was missing something. The second year also gave less satisfying results and I returned to the former method, incorrect according to some, but successful for this garden. Now I am happily digging prolific numbers from the dark soil, finding nuggets of potato treasure.

This garden is an interaction of soil, water, temperature, surroundings, hillside and tending that is unique to this place. It provides a bounty of vegetables from three terraced beds. When neighbors ask advice about how to grow plants, I have to preface every response with, "I can only say how it works in this garden. It might not be effective in another garden at all."

These potatoes before me are indeed a treasure, but more so is the learning that came through this experience. This garden is a unique system of interacting elements and so is my life. My path of evolution is unique. Yes, of course, I am a living being that shares many characteristics with other creatures. But my pattern of growth, learning

and evolution is individual, shaped by the particular experiences, events and choices that characterize it through time. The advice and teaching offered by the expert voices in our modern world might not be suited to this particular phase of my life, might not serve the next step in my learning. The panoply of available wisdom isn't a 'one size fits all', whether it's gardening or the evolution of consciousness. There are sources of knowledge, skills and wisdom from which to learn, but I need to test their advice in the context of my own experience, neither taking it on nor rejecting it without first bringing it to the field of what I have learned. As Thich Nhat Hanh said, "Our own life is the instrument with which we experiment with the truth."



TASTE OF LIFE

Trusting the authority of my own experience is easier in the garden than in other areas of life, most especially in the realm of spirituality, of evolving consciousness. There is temptation to rely on the words, codes and admonitions of others. It can feel safe, and offer the security of what looks right, what meets the general community consensus of how one lives when living a spiritual life. Shakespeare gave wise counsel through his character Polonius's advice to his son, "To thine own self be true. And then it must follow, as night the day, thou canst not be false to any man."

But it takes sincere commitment to self-examination, reflection and honesty to learn how to be true to myself. Being guided by my own learning and experience means uncovering those places where pride, fear, self-importance, laziness, or bolstering self-image are masquerading as authentic guidance, or worse, are justified in the name of authenticity. I have to learn about myself – the many aspects and layers – and have the courage to trust what I learn through experience.

This potato learning isn't about, "See! I was right." It isn't a right-wrong situation. It's the recognition that there isn't a right way for every situation. The appealing certainty of a one-size-fits-all answer doesn't fit the context of a

relational world. Cynthia Bourgeault, writing about Teilhard de Chardin, explains how Chardin addressed the idea of the unity of life. This oneness "doesn't turn its respective participants into a blob, a drop dissolving into the ocean. Rather, it presses them mightily to become more and more themselves: to discover, trust, and fully inhabit their own depths."

In the same way the garden has evolved from rocky, sandy forest soil to one that is a fertile and nourishing medium, I'm building a body of experience and continuing to test it against the wisdom offered in the areas where I want to grow and evolve. This is the key factor, this identifying how I want to evolve, asking: "What kind of person do I want to be? What do I want to strengthen in my life? How do I want to use my energy?" Whether it's conscious or unconscious, through the choices I make each day, I am answering these questions. I want my life to be a conscious response. But I am the only one who can really determine what those responses will be. And they change over time, as I learn through choice and experience.

*It has taken a lot of seasons
to get a fertile garden and a
mind fertile enough to be able
to discriminate, investigate,
examine and trust whether
other's knowledge or advice
is suitable.*





With the potatoes, I am pleased that their growth supports the learning of this garden, how to work with its elements to encourage its productivity, but certainly it is not a case of, “I knew better all along.” Because all along, in the garden and in my life, it’s been a case of trying things, assessing, learning how others do things. It has been the case also, however, that I was influenced hugely by self-doubt through a great deal of my life, assuming other’s knowledge was more worthwhile than my own. It has taken a lot of seasons to get a fertile garden and a mind fertile enough to be able to discriminate, investigate, examine and trust whether other’s knowledge or advice is suitable.

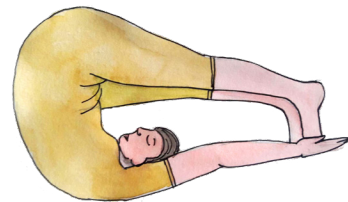
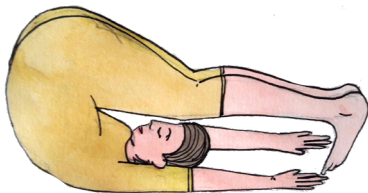
This makes me appreciate the value that so many cultures, especially indigenous ones, have for their elders. There is recognition that living a long time leads to wisdom, through having experienced a great deal and learned a great deal. It takes a long time to develop the authority that comes from experience. In a world that is changing rapidly, the wisdom and knowledge of elders is not generally respected in the countries collectively called (perhaps as a misnomer) the ‘developed world’.

Recently I read an essay by a man who had been the CEO of a large company in the eastern United States, and who began expanding his consciousness by visiting the people on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in the Dakotas. On one trip he brought his mother, and when they entered the room where a meeting was being held, a chair was immediately brought for his mother as she was guided to sit in a place of honor with elders of the tribe. She had never been there before, the man himself wasn’t much known, she was of another race, but that didn’t matter. She was recognized and honored as an elder.

Another way of growing potatoes might be offered to me in the future, in this dance of trying out, learning, keeping, releasing, adjusting. All of it is part of evolving. It’s about keeping open to learning and growing. I have enough experience to trust what I’ve gained so far, but also enough to know that this is a dance indeed as the universe offers possibilities. Where would I be if I had settled with the knowledge I had at eighteen? Some of it was okay. A great deal was deficient. Digging in my heels to hold fast to a position or a view wouldn’t have helped growth, certainly not my own evolution, and it wouldn’t have helped with this great potato harvest either.

Heartfulness Yogasanas

HALASANA - SUPINE POSES



From *Sarvangasana*, slowly lower both feet toward the ground behind the head, without the slightest strain.

If possible touch the toes to the ground behind the head; if not possible allow the feet to suspend above the ground; keeping the legs straight.

If your toes are touching the floor, put your hands flat on the ground behind your back, palms facing the ground.

If your toes are not touching the floor, support your back with your hands, to avoid straining your back.

Keep your knees straight. Point your toes in towards your head and stretch your heels towards the ground.

Relax your whole body.

Hold and stay in the position with gentle, long and deep breaths - in and out six times.

To come out of the position

Place the arms flat on the ground behind your back.

Raise your feet up from the ground behind your head.

Slowly come out of the position unrolling the body and lowering your buttocks to the floor.

Rest and relax in the corpse pose.

BENEFITS

Halasana acts on the upper back and neck region.

Halasana makes the entire spine supple, stretches the muscles, loosens the vertebrae and tones the nerves both inside and outside the spinal column.

The thyroid and parathyroid glands are rendered more efficient.

The abdominal muscles are strengthened and the abdominal organs are massaged.

Halasana helps to alleviate constipation, dyspepsia, diabetes, and various other abdominal ailments.

It revitalizes the liver, spleen, kidneys, pancreas, adrenal glands and so on.

It helps to remove backache, headache and neckache.

THE COOP CROSS COUNTRY FIS WORLD CUP

Over 300 cross country ski champions from over 20 countries, including the USA, Japan, Russia, Norway, Sweden, France, Switzerland and Italy, came to Cogne to take part in the Coop Cross Country FIS World Cup on the 16 and 17 of February. Heartfulness, a silver sponsor of the event, offered all athletes and staff the opportunity to experience the 'Reach Your Peak' challenge.





Cross country skiing is known for its camaraderie, and the bonds and support shared by many of the athletes were clear to see. The people of Cogne also provided a wonderful and warm welcome to their beautiful valley. The lovely weather and sunny days reflected the joy of the athletes and the thousands of enthusiastic spectators who cheered their teams to success. Coverage of this high-profile event beamed around the world as the skiers put their hearts and souls into achieving their best.

The Heartfulness presence was strong throughout the town, and included offering Relaxation sessions in hotels, a Heartfulness stand for general information, high profile banners throughout the course and a video for spectators on the large screen. All competitors received a copy of the Heartfulness magazine. Many Heartfulness volunteers gathered to provide a plethora of languages, which included English, Italian, French, German and Russian, making communication easy for as many nationalities as possible. This coming together of so many volunteers from different countries really symbolizes the international and inclusive spirit of Heartfulness.

Although the link between meditation and sport may not be an obvious one, many top athletes and sportspeople are turning to meditation to help them stay calm and focused. A combination of increasing levels of competition, higher levels of public exposure, and rising distractions are putting extra stress on athletes. The organizers of the Cogné competition were delighted that the Heartfulness Institute was present at the event, and many athletes and team members took up the challenge to try Relaxation and Meditation. All those who took part enjoyed their experience and many felt they were able to relax very deeply.

The Women's Sprint Champion, Jessica Diggins from the USA, said, "I think it's very cool that you guys are doing this," and thanked us for the magazine and our participation in the event.

Athletes have their own ways of managing the stresses of competitive sport. Italian team member, Elisa Brocard, explained that she either relaxes to music or spends time with her family, whilst Jovian Hediger from Switzerland uses physiotherapy. Logan Hanneman from the USA also listens to music and works alongside his sport, which he finds helpful in distracting him from the pressures of competition. He laughed as he explained that he also dreams about flying and looking at airplanes as "otherwise you spend a lot of energy thinking about things you cannot control!"

It was a joy and privilege to be with these young athletes who seem wise beyond their years, perhaps as a natural result of the daily pressures of their competitive environment.



IN THE FIELD

Marco Albarello, Event Manager of the World Cup in Cogne, and former Olympic Cross Country Champion, answers the questions of Sylvie Berti Rossi:

Q: Hello Marco Albarello, are you happy with this World Cup?

Yes, I am very happy with the audience. The public is important for athletes, for their identity, it is something that touches their hearts and allows them to give even more to achieve the final result. The representatives of the International Ski Federation and the organizers on the track are also very happy.

Q: When you were a professional sportsman, did you practice Yoga or meditation?

Yes. At the beginning of my career, when I was world champion, I practiced Yoga, for example in Oberstdorf in 1987. I was really one of the first. I was able to relax very well in my room, but on the track, I was a little more tense!

Q: And did the practice of Yoga help you to concentrate better during sports events?

It is absolutely essential in high-level competition to find who you are in your heart, and from there make the connection with the mind. If there is no such encounter between the heart and the mind, no results are obtained.

Q: As an official sponsor of the World Cup, we offered athletes the opportunity to experience Heartfulness Relaxation and Meditation. Members





of the French, Italian and American teams tried the experiment. Do you think that was a plus for the competition?

The main author of this initiative is my friend Ruben Montagnoli, whom you know well. He was very young when we met, and we were collaborating in the organization of the ski championships. He is someone who thinks, talks little and works. His personality, and especially the calm he has when facing difficulties, allows him to bring something more to the whole team. And that's what he did today. He brings calm to the people who work with us. Relaxation, Yoga and all these techniques that affect what you have in your heart help teams to give their best.

Q: When you were competing, what did you want to bring to the audience that loved, followed and supported you?

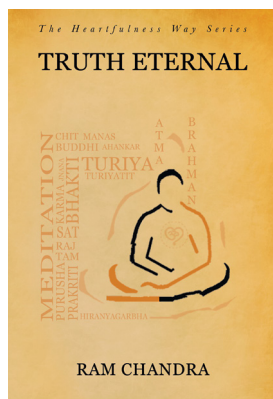
I didn't like to put myself forward, to put myself in the spotlight; I was a little reserved. But I managed to give 50% of my time to advertising, to the image and I spent the rest of my time working, not being seen. It's the right mix to find. If you are too above your soul, you will never be able to be at the level of those around you, nor to really find what you have inside.

Q: So you have to be authentic.

Absolutely, it's not a question of visibility or media exposure, it's something you have to find inside yourself.



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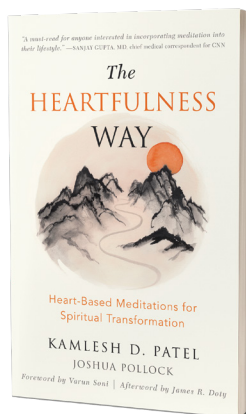
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DESIGNING DESTINY

The Heartfulness Way

From the author of the bestselling book

The Heartfulness Way

daaji
KAMLESH PATEL

What does destiny mean
in the course of our lives?

What is fixed and how much can change?

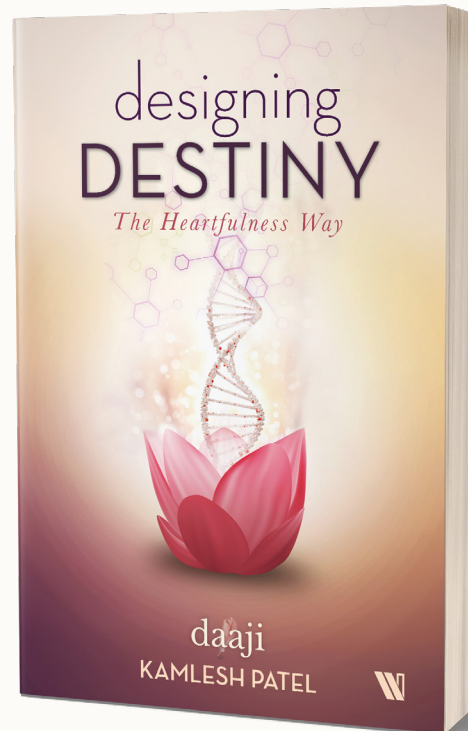
How can we design our own destiny?

In *Designing Destiny*, the second book in *The Heartfulness Way* series, Daaji addresses such questions with simple solutions and practical wisdom, guiding us on how to use the Heartfulness practices to refine our lifestyle and design our destiny, including our destiny in the afterlife.

He elaborates on the subject of consciousness, the role of evolution, and explains what happens to us at the time of birth and death, and how we can act in those pivotal moments when life takes a turn.

Daaji inspires us to believe in ourselves and find a way forward, no matter what the challenge, and look at even the most difficult situation as an opportunity to grow.

He emphasizes that, with a few simple practices, a heart full of enthusiasm and an expanded consciousness, we can all discover our potential and the destiny we were born to fulfil.



The first principle of destiny is that we can only change it in the present.

The second principle is that we create destiny for ourselves with our everyday thoughts—our wishes, what attracts us and repels us, our likes and dislikes.

The third principle is that we need to work upon the mind to design our destiny. And for this we need a meditative practice.

The final principle we explore in the book is that we are not alone—we are all connected. To design the destiny of humanity, we start with ourselves first and then expand our radius to include others. A day will surely come when, together, we are capable of changing the direction humanity is taking.

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