August 2018

# heartfulness

Simply living

## BEING Creative

Awaken Dynamic Imagination: FABIENNE VERDIER

Unlock Untapped Potential: CLARA SMITH



www.heartfulnessmagazine.com

## Heartfulness

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## What's Your Creative Quotient?

#### Dear readers,

Take a few moments to pause and look around. Can you spot two clouds of the same shape and size in the sky. Or two leaves on a tree that are the same shade of green? Have you ever picked up two seashells on the seashore that are exactly the same? Every little snowflake has a unique pattern, just like the stripes on zebras, spots on leopards, and fingerprints of humans. Creativity is the essence of nature. We are part of nature, so we have the same essence within us.

In this issue, we explore creativity in all its facets. We bring to you an exclusive interview with the French painter, Fabienne Verdier, and also artwork and articles by other artists. We continue with Dr Gary Huber's interview on the benefits of meditation for health and well-being, along with articles on work, relationships and much more. In Daaji's series on Ashtanga Yoga, he is now reaching the heart of yogic practice, as he guides us how to dive deep in *Dhyana*, meditation, towards that inner center that is the source of our being, as well as the source of our creativity.

Rather than what we do, creativity is about how we do it. The more we are at peace within, the more we can be creative and inspirational in all that we do. It is within us. So if you are ever asked, "What's your creative quotient?" be bold enough to answer, "Infinite!"

We always look forward to receiving your original articles, poetry, photography and artwork at contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

The editors

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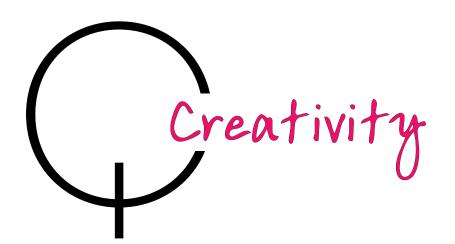
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The creative process is a process of surrender, not control.

Julia Cameron





YOUHEUM SON Illustrator-Designer (@yson.art) New York, USA

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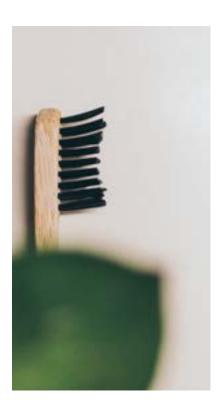
How do you tap into your creative potential?

How does creativity express in you?

Do you have any tips for cultivating creativity and innovation? I practice what gives me joy and happiness to nurture my creativity. I actively venture outdoors on hikes and touch the earth. I also value daily routines like Yoga, meditation, cooking, petting the cat, reading, and sharing with my family. I love building these experiences and precious moments that often become the subject of my work.

I live creatively by finding alternative ways to be more sustainable and connected to the natural world. It's important for me to live in connection with nature and find creative ways to reduce waste and help heal the Earth. Some changes I have committed to are living in a tiny space, going minimal, not contributing to mass production, and transitioning into a zero-waste and plastic-free lifestyle. I enjoy







SAVITHRI SUBASH Junior High School Student Chennai, India



the process of making my own eco-friendly toothpaste, doing the laundry by hand and sharing my story with others.

The most important thing for me is learning to sit with my inner self and opening my imperfections to others. I went through the change of becoming more emotionally and creatively open by focusing less on my vulnerabilities and what I didn't have. This transition helped me nourish my mind and creative spirit. My mind is like a drawing board; a lot of visualization happens all the time. But sometimes I am not able to bring my ideas to life on paper as I'm still young and learning techniques of expression. This can get extremely frustrating. I can go for months without even looking or thinking about my art because I'm upset and angry, and it blocks my desire to create. I have now begun to reach out to find tools and other inspiring artists who help me overcome these blocks. When they are cleared, things begin to flow.

I express my creativity mostly through drawing and painting. The books I read and the songs I listen to are my main inspiration. When I read books, the characters and the plot of the book begin to dance in front of my eyes and I see them as a drawing. With songs, the emotions and the feelings of the song go into me, my own understanding of them emerges and I translate them as drawings and paintings.

It is important to trust my own instincts and feelings, because these are the foundation for all creative work. The more I trust myself, the more I can express myself better in many out-of-the-box ways.



ADAM WALKER (ATUM) Yoga Instructor Kingston, Jamaica

To tap into my creative potential, I try to be really quiet and still, preferably outdoors under a tree at the park or the beach, and allow the energy to just flow. I'm inspired by what I observe in nature and the healing and cleansing it brings.

I write, whether journaling or poetry or even songs. I express my ideas, sometimes making lists of steps and alternatives to achieve my vision. Creativity can be cultivated by listening to the voice within. When you shut out the outside world and really feel still within, there's a higher voice that brings inspiration.

And practice gratitude! Find things for which to give thanks. It welcomes positive vibrations, and you may find more inspiration than you were even hoping for.

P. BALAMURUGAN Heartfulness Fellowship Student Chennai, India

Creativity already exists within us. When I am interested in a particular field or activity, then I am tempted to know more about it and that curiosity leads to innovative ideas. So from my point of view, interest is the main key and that's how I tap into my creative potential. Mostly I do what interests me.

For my final project during my postgraduate degree, I felt like doing something creative, but I didn't know how to start and take it further. A thought sparked inside that with the concept of a leaf I could design something, and that thought gave me an idea to work upon. I was curious, so I started to plan and research the design. I collected a lot of information that gave me a perfect vision of how to proceed,

Creativity can be cultivated by listening to the voice within. When you shut out the outside world and really feel still within, there's a higher voice that brings inspiration.



YOUR PHOTO HERE!



and finally I made a wonderful workstation with the concept of a leaf.

This has now become a habit: whenever any creative thought comes, I work with the process of thought-idea-curiosity-planresearch-vision-action. This is how creativity expresses in me.

To be creative, develop interest. Introspection and meditation help to reveal things within. Reading and listening also develop creativity.

### DEAR READERS, -

### September Questions:

- 1. What is consciousness?
- 2. How do you personally explore the subconscious and superconscious parts of your consciousness spectrum?
- 3. What defines today's collective human consciousness?

E-mail original responses based on personal experience, less than 100 words, on one or more questions to contributions@ heartfulnessmagazine.com.

Include your full name, profession, city & country, and a smiling headshot in JPEG format >300 dpi resolution. Send before August 3, 2018.

## TURN ON YOUR Creative Instinct



**G. PRIYADARSHINI** is learning to nurture her creativity. She shares with us some of the things that have worked for her as a student of the creative process.

### Creativity

here do ideas come from? I've been pondering this question a lot lately. Creativity is not just thinking or logical reasoning, it's visceral, it's within me, it's a part of who I am. If I want to improve, I must have a better feeling. Knowledge and imagination help unlock this potential, and they are available within us. Add attitude to these two and creativity emerges.

Newton's first law says, "A body at rest will remain at rest unless acted upon by an external unbalanced force." To me it means:

Whatever is there in our mind space has to manifest in reality.

If there are ideas in the mind, provoke them to come out.

Instead of waiting for things to happen, push them to happen.

Experiment every day.

Even simple work can be an experiment – try and work it out.

Learn to let go of outcomes and imperfections, and then more will be created than ever.

I started working with young children. I started working as a teacher mainly to observe how children absorb things, and voila, I found creativity expressed in every small thing that they do. I like to motivate the people around me to bring their thoughts into action. In order to realize this, and as a way to contribute to society, I started working with young children. I started working as a teacher mainly to observe how children absorb things, and voila, I found creativity expressed in every small thing that they do. Being with them is a vibrant place for me to be creative – singing songs, playing music, drawing, painting, doing craft, making dolls with wool etc. I enjoy being creative in every act I do.

Here are some things that all of us can do for new ideas:

#### Spend time outside every day.

It may be a simple walk for ten to fifteen minutes. Take deep breaths and appreciate the surroundings and nature around you. It can help you to connect with yourself more deeply.

### Take a digital detox.

Step out of devices for some time in the day and see the difference.

### Meditate.

This is one essential skill that enhances creativity and innovation, because we learn to see a clear picture of what's going on inside us.

## Celebrate great ideas, regardless of who has them.

Most innovations come when we connect and combine ideas. So share your ideas, and respect the ideas of others when they share.

Creativity and innovation are inbuilt in us, like an engine. It's up to us to turn it on!

Beyond



KATE MARTIN is an abstract artist, who has been painting professionally for the last year and a half. She also does custom commission pieces. You may contact her at coloursbykate@outlook.com or via instagram @coloursbykate.



Color has always been a huge part of my life. Growing up in a family painting business and helping my father select colors for his clients started my passion and love for color. I find so much joy in being able to create artwork that will bring color into the lives of others too. The style of painting I enjoy the most is abstract, mostly water inspired, whether it be ocean, waves or just a fluid motion. I also enjoy incorporating floral designs.

When beginning a new piece there is no premeditated design. I may have certain colors I would like to use or try, but once I begin that all falls away and I pour out what is in me onto the canvas. I enjoy experimenting with different media and pushing them to uncover new and exciting results. I was recently asked to use the experience of a 'salt float' as inspiration to create a piece of art. When I was in the tank lying weightless, a feeling of peace came over me. As the negativity of thoughts tried to creep in, the feeling of peace took over and blocked those bad vibes. It was a wonderful feeling. I used that hour to pray and be thankful as I reflected on the blessing of life.

I then created 'Beyond' using Acrylic High Flow, medium bodied acrylic and spray paints, by applying paint in a watercolor style. Lots of watery layers. It gives a feeling of light, air, peace, joy and warmth.

## SPIRIT self

VIMAL KUMAR is a multidisciplinary Singaporean artist whose works often explore themes related to culture, ethnicity, spirituality and ecology. He works with traditional media such as oils, gouache and ink. Recently he has been exploring other media such as photography and digital painting. Instagram @vamsidhari.art





This painting is an imaginary depiction of various aspects of my spirit self, making it an unusual self-portrait. The turquoise skin tone evokes a sense of depth and allpervasiveness that we get from the sky and ocean: I find my inner self situated within the core of my mortal body. The third eye symbolizes my ability to perceive things that are invisible to the external eyes, signifying the opening of intuitiveness and self-awareness. Lotuses that are yet to bloom symbolize peace, calmness and freshness that I can possess eternally from within. The illuminated rainbow is the complete balance of my energies in my subtle spirit body. I picture myself as a calm, composed and effulgent being, filled with pure energy that is both vibrant and exuberant. Indeed, it is a meditative process that seeks to invoke these positive qualities to manifest from our inner nature to the external physical body.

I chose oil as a medium to achieve the desired tones and textures from the blending of various colors. Since there are no limits to creating something from imagination, I exercised full freedom in depicting my inner spirit the way I see it.

## the potency of a seed





### PARTHASARATHI RAJAGOPALACHARI (1927-2014) explores some age-old questions about creation and creativity, and how we nurture 'seed' ideas in order to create uniqueness and innovation.

y Guide once said, "There has been one question which has been before the world's philosophers throughout time: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Which came first, the seed or the tree?" And he said, "God is not a fool to make a tree when he can make a seed and make it grow into a tree!"

Western science has stumbled upon this, perhaps truth, perhaps secret, when they talk of the mighty atom which was the seed of the Universe in some distant past time, and that has grown into this Universe. One day it will collapse back into itself and become the seed again, and it goes in a swinging way like this. It is the dance of Shiva, as they call it in Hindu mythology – creation, destruction, creation. It is only a collapse of the whole thing into itself that becomes the seed for the next creation.

So the gift is given to us in seed form. I remember a children's story about a man who had some children. One of the children was avaricious, another was greedy, and the third was a patient worker. When the old man died, they found that in his will he had left factories to one, to the second he had left his money, and to the last son he had left a packet of seeds. When the distribution occurred everybody thought it was highly unfair. The old man must have been a stupid fellow to treat his sons so differently, especially the youngest, who got a packet of seeds. But it was the youngest who became famous. He used those seeds to cultivate enormous forests, from which he cut trees, got timber and all the paraphernalia of wealth.

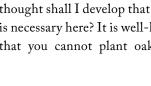
The purpose of a tree is to bring more seeds, and the seeds fall to the ground and become trees again. Suppose a tree were just to multiply and make more trees, what would happen? There is no beauty, there is no creation, there is no newness, there is no novelty, there is no change. It is in this aspect of creation from a seed into a fullgrown thing - whether it is a plant, or an animal, or a human being, or even a universe - that the possibility of change comes. Speaking in terms of biology, that is where mutation comes into picture. If you produce clones, there is never any mutation, there is never any change.

Variety is there not because God produced varieties, but because he produced seeds and gave them the

opportunity of change, of being affected by external circumstances, and this produces uniqueness in each individual growth. Therefore uniqueness is a product of small, seeded gifts.

We can strive to express what is hidden in us in seed form. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, there is one story in which a seed was cut and the boy says, "There is nothing inside." The rishi says, "From that nothing this tree has come." It is from nothingness that everything comes. From something only something can come. It is a vital equation. From something only something can come. From nothing the possibility of everything coming exists.

From a seed comes what? Plenty. From plenty comes what? Only seeds, again to produce plenty. One seed thought must multiply. Otherwise we would not go and buy seeds. Imagine having to buy sheaves of grain and plant them in your garden only to cut them, take them out only to thresh them again. So the effort is not so much in developing the seed as in finding the right seed. What seeds should I use? Which seed thought should I use? From which seed thought shall I develop that which is necessary here? It is well-known that you cannot plant oak trees



where mangoes grow. So, the right seed is needed!

I have known many people who are interested in gardening, and when any of them plant seeds with a negative idea, "Oh, I don't know how many of these will come," nothing comes. And there are others who know nothing of botany and zoology, of seeds and soil science. They plant with love, water their garden tenderly, and everything thrives. We say that they have green fingers; they are the 'love-hearted'. What are green fingers? It is the love that goes with the water to the seed. It is the love to which the seed responds and grows.

So when we are given seed gifts, treat them gently, with love and with care. Water them with patience and let them grow spontaneously.

Excerpts from a talk, 'The Potency of a Seed'.

It is from nothingness that everything comes. From something only something can come. It is a vital equation. From something only something can come. From nothing the possibility of everything coming exists.





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## thought in action

Synergy is the highest activity of life; it creates new untapped alternatives; it values and exploits the mental, emotional, and psychological differences between people.

Stephen Covey





## THE BUSINESS OF **BEING**

– an excerpt –



The Business of Being: Your Soul Purpose In and Out of the Workplace by LAURIE BUCHANAN is a book that maps personal transformation at the intersection of business and spirituality. Merging the language of business and self-help, *The Business of Being* teaches how to enhance 'profitability' – body, mind and spirit – and combines a personal guide and business manual with a culinary story. Here is an excerpt from the Preface.

### JOB, CAREER, AND VOCATION – THE DIFFERENCES

The Business of Being looks at the world of business as it relates to our personal lives. And because companies are comprised of individuals, let's take a moment to clarify the differences between job, career, and vocation.

A job is something that's limited in duration. It's a monetary stopgap until we find something long-term: a career. In their book, *Designing Your Life*, authors Bill Burnett and Dave Evans say, "In America, two-thirds of workers are unhappy with their jobs. And fifteen percent actually hate their work."

A career can span decades, and it generates income. Often people include their careers when making introductions because our career is a large part of who we are. Another startling statistic in *Designing Your Life* is "In the United States, only twenty-seven percent of college grads end up in a career related to their majors."

A vocation is a calling. The word is a derivative of the Latin *vocare*, or voice (God's voice). It's something that brings deep fulfillment, is meaningful, joyful, and excites us; it might even have a positive social impact. It can be our career, or it can be separate. It can be commercially viable but not necessarily.

In his book *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*, author Frederick Buechner says, "The place God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." Vocation occupies the place where the crosshairs meet. One of my colleagues is researching the connection between vocation and aging. In her Forbes article, "A Better Way to Say 'I'm Retired," author and former president of and professor at Goshen College, Shirley Hershey Showalter, wrote, "The coolest thing about a vocation is that it can be practiced anywhere. You don't need a job. It helps if you have had a career related to your vocation, but only because a career gives you lots of opportunity to practice."

If you ask Shirley, "What do you do?" she answers, "Jubilee." When prompted to elaborate, she explains, "Latin Americans have no such word for the concept of 'retirement'. I didn't know this. Instead, they use the word *jubilación* for the post-career stage of life."

She expands: "Jubilación means jubilation in English. The root word is jubilee. If you substitute jubilation for retirement, you can call your work in the elder stages 'jubilee'. From there, it is easy to get to the alliterative phrase 'my job is jubilee."

A perfect fit, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines jubilee as "a season of celebration."

A vocation is a calling. The word is a derivative of the Latin vocare, or voice (God's voice). It's something that brings deep fulfillment, is meaningful, joyful, and excites us; it might even have a positive social impact.





### DO BE DO BE DO ...

I'm often asked for my thoughts about the difference between doing and being and which one I feel is more important.

One of the byproducts of today's fast-paced culture is busyness. With our amazing technology, we're efficient, productive, and more inclined than ever to use our time to accomplish.

In color therapy, doing is associated with yellow. Visible and active, doing is external in nature. Doing stirs things up. It's in the act of doing that we serve others.

In color therapy, being is associated with violet. Invisible and passive, being is internal in nature. Being is reflective. When we listen in the quietness of being, we learn what to do.

"Don't just do something – sit there!" —Sylvia Boorstein, psychotherapist, co-founding teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center, and author

Interestingly, yellow and violet reside directly across from each other on the color wheel. In nature, a beautiful depiction of this balance can be seen in ametrine, a semiprecious stone that's a natural blend of amethyst (violet/purple) and citrine (yellow/gold).  $\mathbf{Q}$ 

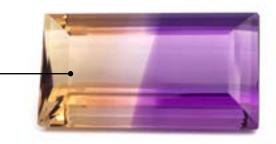
In our everyday lives, the balance between doing and being is expressed as:

Engagement and solitude Serving and abiding Real life and reflective life Application and restoration Work and rest

Weaving a balanced combination of both threads – doing and being – into our life's tapestry is ideal; they're both important. A balanced life of doing and being nourishes both practice and perspective.

"People who can make an explicit connection between their work and something socially meaningful to them are more likely to find satisfaction, and are better able to adapt to the inevitable stresses and compromises that come with working in the world."

-Martin Seligman, psychologist, educator and author





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## HAPPY HEARTS

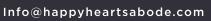
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Mind - The Breeding Ground of Thoughts

In the previous 6 articles of this series **RAVI VENKATESAN** explored feelings and emotions in the heart, as well as the role played by our ego and intellect in negotiations. In this article we'll learn the role our mind plays in negotiations, some of the distractions that are part of its nature, and how to focus it to achieve better outcomes.

The mind has been a topic of study and curiosity for us since time immemorial. Wikipedia describes psychology as the science of behavior and mind, including conscious and unconscious phenomena, as well as feeling. The mind and heart are not two different things, but rather two ends of a spectrum. In the last article in this series, we discussed the mind as one of the non-physical or subtle things that are part of us nevertheless. The mind doesn't have any kind of 'moral compass'. This comes from the 'heart'. For example, your mind can help you plan a heinous crime, including every step and scenario, just as well as it will help you plan how to build an orphanage. This is why heartful negotiators always use the heart to direct or lead the mind.

In modern times, the conscious portion of our minds is often in a distracted and non-focused state, operating at a very low rate efficiency rate. This is because of multiple causes, such as cell phones, televisions, desires for all kinds of things, stress levels, anxieties etc. For many of us the normal state of mind is one of unregulated wandering, with ad hoc ideas and thoughts coming up all the time. Many of us blame our minds for lack of peace and calm. I have heard many people even say, "If I could only stop my mind for a few minutes I would feel much better, but it keeps churning constantly." Many can't sleep at night because of a hyperactive mind, causing health issues as well.

When it comes to negotiations, a negotiator with a wandering mind will receive inputs from inside themselves through ad hoc thoughts and ideas. These inputs cause them to miss important details, and also to make decisions based on thoughts that have distorted reality for them. To understand this better, consider the following scenario of negotiation between Chris, a young pianist, and Joseph, an artist and repertoire manager at CoolRecords, a well-known record company. Chris has the opportunity to record his first album with CoolRecords, and is negotiating the makeup of this album with Joseph.

JOSEPH: Chris, we are delighted to record your first album. You must be very excited about this experience.

[Chris thinks to himself: He is going to try to lowball me on royalty since it is my first album. I am going to hold firm.]

CHRIS: Hi Joseph, I am excited but even though this is my first album, I have had conversations with many record companies and understand how all this works.



JOSEPH: That is great to hear, it will make the whole process easier. We have a few suggestions on the content of the album first.

[Chris is still distracted with thoughts about being taken advantage of, and misses the first part of what Joseph said. He only hears the second sentence.]

CHRIS: Suggestions – what for? I am pretty happy with the content as is and don't want any creative interference.

JOSEPH: Chris, I don't appreciate your approach. We have a right to suggest changes to the content to improve marketability, keeping in mind that this is your first album.

[Chris now starts getting afraid of losing his contract and thinks that he needs to totally change his approach.]

CHRIS: I am sorry. Just let me know whatever you need me to change.

JOSEPH: There is no need for an apology, but just understand what we are trying to do here. You will be fine.

What happened here is very common. Chris's mind created several illusions within this simple negotiation. Joseph never even intended to discuss royalty or commercial aspects, but Chris assumed he would. Joseph never intended to take advantage of this being Chris's first album, even though Chris assumed he did. Chris couldn't pay enough attention to what Joseph was saying because of all these thoughts floating around in his own mind.

Tips to manage your mind through heartful negotiations:

- Be alert to the ideas and thoughts that pop up. Are they real? Or are they made up?
- Clear your mind before any negotiation. The Heartfulness Meditation process can help with this tremendously. Even 15 minutes of meditation can clear your mind and put you in a very calm state.
- Focus your mind on the present. The mind has a tendency to wander into the past and the future. Bringing it to the present can let you absorb all the relevant information and make the best decisions and negotiate effectively.
- Refer to the heart whenever you are in doubt. The mind has no moral compass, but the heart will always give you the right signal, the right answer. The way to do this is simply to pause, go deeper into yourself, and let an answer emerge naturally.

In the next article we'll summarize everything we've learnt so far, and put it into an easy to use checklist for heartful negotiations. Till then, good luck in regulating your mind and leading it with your heart!

# **YNERGY**

**ELIZABETH DENLEY** explores the role we can play in each others' growth, and how this changes the atmosphere in any workplace.

It is greatest to believe and to hope well of the world, because he who does so quits the world, and makes the world he lives in. —Ralph Waldo Emerson Social Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence. Teamwork. Cooperation. Harmony. Integration of different perspectives. Effective communication. Mutual trust and respect.

Today these qualities are recognized as super skills in the fast-paced world of corporate business. While it is a welcome thing that they are becoming more valued in corporate culture, it seems quite ludicrous that we had to wait for scientists and psychologists to tell us that emotional intelligence is a desirable human trait for success in the corporate world. Was it ever not a truism?

Such traits are neither highly evolved nor worthy of praise. In fact, they form our basic human duty to one another, and have been described in the human codes of conduct laid down over the centuries in all cultures: the eightfold path of Buddhism, the Sutras of Yoga, the Quran, the Bible, the Talmud, and many other indigenous codes. They remind us of the need for harmony, brotherhood and peace, which are at the foundation of functioning human society, and yet the world today is still plagued by conflict and inequality.

One solution is simply to cultivate these traits to get to first base, but I feel that we need to aim higher – we are setting the bar too low. Peaceful coexistence is not enough. We need to explore a deeper level of collective consciousness, and that is the realm of synergy and symbiosis.

Synergy is when together we produce a combined effect that is greater than the sum of what we can do separately. In synergy we amplify and magnify each other. Like in physics, when two waves interact they can either amplify each other or dampen each other. When they vibrate at the same frequency, in phase with one another, they amplify each other, creating a wave that is greater than either wave on its own. When they are out of phase with one another, they may cancel each other out.

Can we use this analogy to understand how to amplify each other when we work together in teams? Actually, the positive and the negative can both happen to great effect. For example, what happens when we amplify each other's talents and skills, and neutralize each other's weaknesses? Unfortunately, all too often we amplify each other's weaknesses by judging and finding fault, and nullify each other's talents and skills by harping on

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What is required for us to grow together and support each other to thrive? What will it take for us to recognize and nurture the genius in one another? Each of us does have a particular genius that can either develop or be squashed. And for humanity to really flourish, the genius of each individual piece of the human jigsaw puzzle must blossom and flourish. The consciousness that promotes development and synergy has been so beautifully expressed by Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur in the words, "There is nothing wrong in thinking that you are great, but always think that the other person is greater."

Another practice that I have found really works in nurturing synergy and symbiosis is to always focus on the potential in others rather than their manifest limitations. Trust the potential in others. Keep that goal as something tangible. It works with children's education, and it also works with adults. They feel honored and supported by your thoughts.

Also, trust the potential within yourself. The ripple effect will work then. How to trust your own potential? That is where meditation comes into the picture – the more you uncover your inner potential, the easier it is to trust it and let it shine forth. We help ourselves to set the bar higher and higher all the time, and then we can help each other to do the same. It is one big positive feedback loop!



# INTERVIEW

A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent upon arriving. A good artist lets his intuition lead him wherever it wants. A good scientist has freed himself of concepts and keeps his mind open to what is.

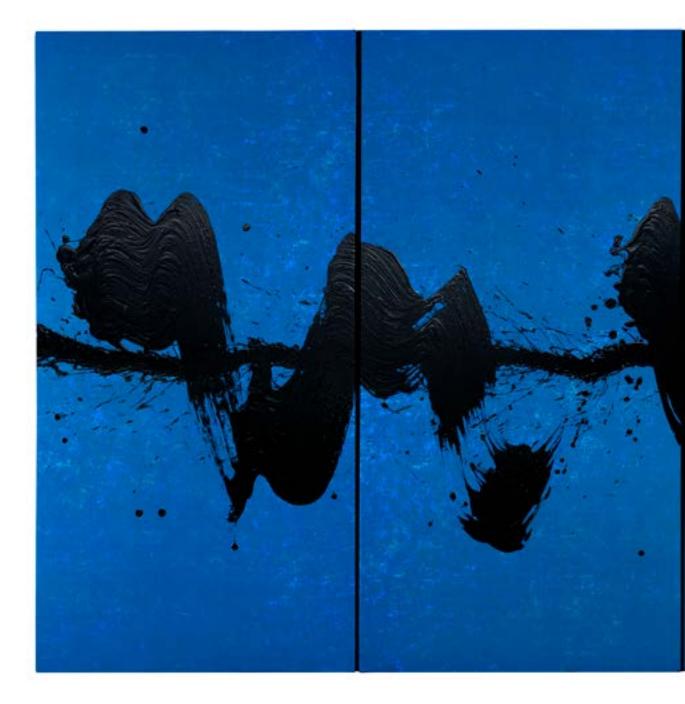
Laozi

## AWAKENING DYNAMIC IMAGINATION



## An interview with Fabienne Verdier

FABIENNE VERDIER is a French painter who creates unique and fascinating work. Having received international recognition, her work is exhibited in large public and private museum collections. At the age of 22 she flew to Sichuan, China, a remote region close to Tibet where she met the old Chinese masters and learnt calligraphy, the millenarian art of scholars. And now, with a single brushstroke, she has created a new universal pictorial language. Here she is interviewed by the passionate art historian and consultant, DÉBORAH FEST KINDLER.



Can you present your work for us in a few words?

The living is at the heart of my work. I seek to explore all forms of life that surround us. Their dynamism and their energies interest me, and I try to transcribe them into painting.

What made you become an artist?

 $\bigvee From a very young age I felt the need to make an effort to reach out to others and have a$ 

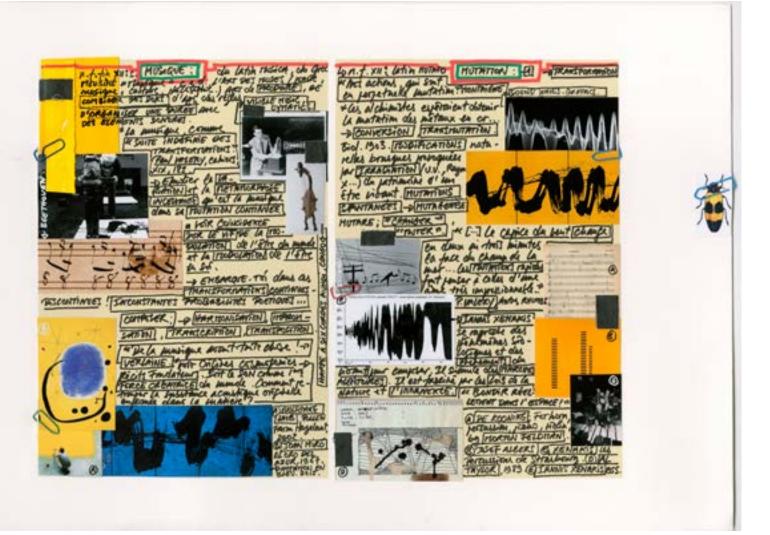
mutual exchange. It is this vital expression that we each have within us that we can perhaps share. I thought painting would be a possible way. What is more beautiful than to discuss forms and ideas? But for that, it was necessary to work on myself, to explore the history of art, to study the forms and feelings which have already been explored, and to try in turn to touch the heart of people.

I have always been stunned by the idea that we can transmit an inner experience of great intensity within a small humble wooden frame.



Also, from an early age, art has been an inner necessity and an escape for you.

As a child, I was very sensitive and receptive to all forms of vibration, all that awakened a dynamic in my imagination. In my painting I try to retransmit this experience of the living. This sharing of feelings is for me almost a necessity. As a young teenager, I was very struck by violence, conflict and war. And my complex family situation echoed all that television transmitted. I remember a time when I did not really want to live. So I had a need to plant my little secret garden to be able just to live. And a very strict requirement developed – I felt the need for a kind of integrity, authenticity and truthfulness. And I wondered: how is it possible to bring something to the world of painting after all the great masters I love so much? After Matisse, who was totally connected to the nature and spirit of the living; after Monet, who spent his life in front of his water lilies so that he could capture the effusions, the variations and the refractions of light; and after the American abstract painters who I admire so much. I was very lucky because while quite young I frequented the museums and galleries in the city of Paris,



especially the Museum of Modern Art. Soon I wanted to live in that world.

Nourished by Western art, you went to study at the École des Beaux-Arts in Toulouse. Yet, while you were a brilliant student, this step was quite painful because you did not agree with the way the teaching was offered. And once you had graduated, you decided to leave everything and go to the other side of the world.

Yes it's true, at that time I did not agree with what the school taught me. I searched and searched and found what I was looking for outside school. And it was the big departure, my initiatory journey; we all go through it. Direction China. It was the 1980s.

I have always been interested in movement, and at the time it seemed that there was a problem in the way we were supposed to represent our emotions: we were supposed to fix them, but then we are stagnant. And as soon as there is no movement, it's a kind of death for me. I was looking for something like the flight of the bird that fascinates me so much... the flutter of life. So I found myself at odds with my teachers. They agreed that they could not transmit to me what I was looking for, that it was not in France in an École des Beaux-Arts, but that I would find it in Asia perhaps, through the ancient art of painting and scholars. I was already closer to the musician in the desire for spontaneous interpretation, sound and vibratory play.

I bounce back to this issue of spontaneity ...

Bounce back: you have chosen the right word. Living is simply that, bouncing back. It's an elasticity, and I try to convey that in painting. It is dynamic, vibratory energy. It was thanks to the act of painting vertically and to my encounter with Chinese art that I realized I could perhaps contribute something.

Your journey is impressive. From the beginning you were searching, in search of freedom and spontaneity in painting. You chose to study in China, with a demanding, disciplined and very strict training, and you came out even more free and spontaneous.

Yes, after 40 years of work! In these millennial traditions, for example in Japan, when you are an apprentice, it is difficult to also be original and innovative. It's the same in music: you can be an excellent performer of Bach or Fauré but you are not necessarily a creator. First I became a good interpreter of the great masters, but the step between being an interpreter, between having understood the state of mind of the masters, and creating something original is very difficult. Because you have to dare transformation, dare synthesis, dare to break from tradition.

### Is that creativity?

Yes exactly. In fact, my work was very critically received by some sinologists, because I dared to invent and I dared to transform in order to fly.

How was your work received in France?

Earlier on it was very difficult for me, as my work was sometimes received very critically in France. The art world had difficulty understanding what literate culture could bring to abstract painting, and quickly put a label on my work. Being a pioneer and being accepted and recognized in this form of cultural synthesis takes a very long time!

Today your work is well recognized. It has been the subject of much attention and many publications, so it is now better understood and more obvious to people, bringing tremendous freedom and public ownership. You have to go beyond mastery, because it can lock you into a tradition and dictate a path. The acceptance of letting go of mastery allows you to be more receptive. Not to stay on track requires a constant and challenging work on oneself.

I work for that, so that the abstraction can set in motion the imagination of anyone who looks at it. I work so that those who find themselves in the painting become a little more alive, by awakening in them, for example, the forms stored in their memory, experiences of their contact with the wind, the clouds, the minerals, the mountains, sounds, and reactivating all that. Yes, I'm just trying to wake up those people who take the time to connect to the tableau, to the living within them, through the art.

Are you between mastery and letting go?

Yes, you have to go beyond mastery, because it can lock you into a tradition and dictate a path. The acceptance of letting go of mastery allows you to be more receptive. Not to stay on track requires a constant and challenging work on oneself.

If we stay in control we become aesthetic. But I feel that there is such diversity, such variation in the world around us, that we have to listen, to be receptive to the inner transformation of things, play with the mind and transmit. For example, one day you may be moved by the shadows that awaken things in you, or by the water that evokes a memory.

It is a profound work of contemplation and also practice of the eye.



It is a constant work of sharpening observation. Recently I was at the edge of a river, and it was amazing. I saw the brushstrokes in the water! Everything was there, I was stunned. I find the same lines when I work on wind, currents of air or plate tectonics.

You work in a very particular way, having created tools and brushes that resonate with your body and your research. And standing in pictorial space, you seem to be performing a choreography guided by your own inner process. Can you tell us about this? In Europe and the West we have always worked on easels. By the force of gravity and earthly attraction, the material falls from the brush and we keep reapplying paint to the brush. The artist must work with a stickiest material possible so that it adheres to the canvas.

What interested me in the work of the Chinese masters was the act of painting with the canvas on the ground. At first I took a long time to understand that this way of painting plays with the natural forces at work, that of gravity in particular. Then, when I understood that all aspects of the universe are shaped by this physical law,



I realized that in the act of painting from above, what flows from my brush may have more of a chance to be in harmony with the forms of nature that are born under the same forces.

And so I wanted to use larger brushes, but the weight was too heavy for me. So when I returned to France, I worked on brushes, using a mechanism that allowed me more freedom in space. My father first suggested to me to use elastic cables. Then, using my experience and research, and aided by discussions with scientists, I was able to develop new tools. So I created a new brush with the handlebar of a bicycle, and a kind of third dimension appeared in the paint stroke. I realized that every time I make even the tiniest change in my tools, I create a different trait. These explorations fascinate me.

#### To be continued

#### https://fabienneverdier.com



Let there be spaces in your togetherness, And let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love: Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Khalil Gibran

# The Importance Of Bonding

Between Parent And Child

What does your child really seek from you? What does being with your child mean to you? **SNEHAL DESHPANDE** shares her insights on the formative years of life and explains the significance of bonding in children's overall development. shwin is a 3-year-old boy who came to me today with his parents. His mother is a high profile HR head in a multinational corporation and his father is an investment banker. They recently discovered that Ashwin was not speaking or making any eye contact. He is looked after by a caregiver at home, who spends most of her time in front of her mobile phone. The boy speaks out dialogues from Peppa Pig with clarity, and he also emotes the character of Doremon. He plays with cars and toys, but he loves to arrange them in one line. He loves to move around himself and watch the ceiling fan. He avoids eye contact and does not like to initiate a conversation.

This is a common scenario in many households nowadays. As a therapist I have come across a lot of children who



are insecure and anxious. What leads to this? There is a missing bond or attachment, which the child does not share with his caregiver. He or she cannot understand where the circle of security lies.

The British psychoanalyst, John Bowlby, did a lot of pioneering work in the field of connections, explaining through his attachment theory how babies attach to their mothers for reasons of survival, and also describing the effect of deprivation of attachment on infants. Infants become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive, and who remain as consistent caregivers for some months during the period from about six months to two years of age. Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment, which in turn lead to internal working Parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment, which in turn lead to internal working models that guide the individual's feelings, thoughts, and expectations in later life and relationships. models that guide the individual's feelings, thoughts, and expectations in later life and relationships.

In normal development, the first two years after birth usually see the development of the pre-frontal cortex, and this helps to create resilience strategies. It also develops a sense of security, which supports healthy self-development, self-regulation and self-confidence. Responsive parenting creates a sense of safety, trust and a sense of importance and belongingness, and all these factors together form a sense of competence.

Dr Stuart Shanker, in his book *Self-Reg*, explains how parent-baby social interaction happens through facial expressions, gestures, posture and vocalization. He notes that what is going on is not simply shared understanding: "This is a much more primitive co-regulatory process in which each responds automatically, both behaviourally and viscerally to what the other is feeling. It is, in fact, the foundation on which mindreading – the ability to know what others are thinking or feeling from the body language – is built."

The first two years of a child's life is an enriched period of sensory abilities and uptake. The discovery of mirror neurons by neuroscientists is a good example of extrapolation from scientific data to clinical applications. The mirror neurons help us feel and emote the feelings of another person and could be the basis of empathy. As we observe the non-verbal communication neurons firing in the brains of others, mirroring what we are seeing and sending the signal of that mirroring towards the insular cortex, we feel what the other person is feeling. So it is important that we understand why children need our presence and feelings during the first two years, which are the formative years of life.

#### HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS:

BOND well with your child. The first few months are the best months to create a lifelong bond with your baby.

EMPOWER YOURSELF with the feelings of love, security and belongingness. You can share what you have with you. A parent's anxious feelings are picked by the little one. If the parent is joyful, the little one is also joyful. Such feelings are immediately picked up by the pre-frontal cortex, which is important in regulating the emotions, motivation, reward and empathy from others.

REPLACE DIGITAL device and media time with together time. Spending time talking to your child will increase attention. The use of gestures helps to emote actions, such as singing and dancing together.

EQUIP YOURSELF with the knowledge of stages of development in children and provide toys that are appropriate of their age.

WHEN LEAVING CHILDREN WITH A CAREGIVER, make sure that the caregiver is experienced in providing for their emotional and developmental needs so as to increase a sense of connectivity.

WHEN IT COMES TO BONDING between parents and children, socializing is essential so that children develop the skills of conversation and communication naturally.

TAKE NATURE WALKS with your child.

LET CHILDREN PLAY with natural media like water, clay and mud paints so as to expose their skills and talent.

ENCOURAGE GRANDPARENTS to be with your child.

AVOID EXPOSING children to electronic gadgets at a young age.

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE for good parenting by a loving mother.

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Artwork by: Youheum Son



### OF INSPIRATION



JEAN APPLEBY has been an artist all her life. Recently she spent time as an artist in residence at the Kanha Shantivanam ashram, near Hyderabad in India, setting up the pottery studio and teaching adults and children about the joys of pottery. She was interviewed by MEGHANA ANAND while running programs with children. How did you get pulled into this field of art and creativity?

I knew when I was eight years old that I would be an artist, that I was born an artist. In the seventh grade I was encouraged by my teachers to enter my work in a student exhibition. By the time I was in high school I studied art intensely, as well as academics, and I knew that I would major in arts in college.

What inspires you in your work? Also, how does your work inspire you?

I knew that I was born with creative talent, that I was good at making things and sensing what was in my heart and expressing it. I think, in a way, art-making is a form of meditation, because every artist goes inside to reflect: What is it that I want to express? What medium do I use to illustrate what's really inspiring me?

I've always enjoyed hiking and camping and being in beautiful places in nature. Nature has been an inspiration; the forms in nature have been an inspiration.

While studying in college to be a professional artist, we were taught the fundamentals of design in the same way that engineers and scientists learn the fundamentals of the scientific While studying in college to be a professional artist, we were taught the fundamentals of design in the same way that engineers and scientists learn the fundamentals of the scientific method. To design something is a process, a very artistic problem-solving process. So it's that design process I learnt in college that I have applied to every problemsolving activity.

method. To design something is a process, a very artistic problemsolving process. So it's that design process I learnt in college that I have applied to every problem-solving activity. Whether I was designing a curriculum, or a new program with community partners, or some training for some students, it was always based on the fundamentals of the design process. It's a way of thinking and looking and observing. For the problem that's posed, we come up with a visual solution. It's the rhythm of work that goes from an idea to something that's a threedimensional sculpture on a pedestal in an art gallery. It starts with an idea, and then it is executed.

All of the work that has been done up till now has taught me how to do this current work. I've sold most of it, and so when people ask me, "Don't you want to hold on to things?" I say, "No, this piece has taught me what I need to do next so I am free to let it go."

That's a beautiful insight. Can you share how pottery has evolved through time, both as a skill and an art? Where are we with it in current times?

Men and women have been making pots out of local clay dug from the earth for



We actually have the responsibility to uncover our talents and where our creativity lies.

literally thousands of years. When archeologists excavate important ancient sites they almost always find pots. They are of two types: functional pots that were used to carry water and oil to cook, to light, used in an everyday way to support family life, and pots or tiles or warm murals that were artistic in nature. They were made from the beginning to tell the story of that culture and that civilization. Men and women have been doing that for thousands of years. In the same way that they drew on a wall, they would take clay from the earth and make a form they could heat in a fire and use to meet their needs.

In today's world, different terms are used for clay art: pottery, ceramics, and other types of clay art-making. There are people who make functional pieces, and there are those who make artwork using clay or clay and other materials in some combination.

Are there any benefits of cooking and eating in clay or earthen vessels?

Here in India, there is a sense that cooking in clay is healthier than cooking in different types of metal pots. I haven't done the scientific research to know specific benefits, but I can tell you that when you cook in a clay vessel it's a surface that doesn't add to the food. It doesn't affect the food and it doesn't change the food chemically. If I prepare dahl in a casserole, it's going to cook slowly. It's an even transfer of heat. And the most important thing is that the glazed surface itself does not combine with the food material. It's not mixing or changing the food in an unhealthy way. Foods cooked in an aluminum pan, like lemon juice and other acidic types of foods, interact with the aluminum and that alters the food.

After spending many years as an art educator, you are now getting back to making art. Do you see any difference in the way you approach art from then to now?

I'm not too sure what this new work is going to look like yet, but I know that it will be influenced by my historical work, what I have learnt from experience,



working with others in the arts and in education, and my meditation practice. So I think my art today will be a combination of these three things.

Can you talk more on meditation and art?

 $\bigcup \bigwedge_{i=1}^{I} I \text{ think that art-making} \\ \text{is a form of meditation.} \\ \text{Both meditation and art-making}$ 

are practices. One of my teachers and a person whom I admire, Dr John Carter, has defined a practice as, "Anything that you want to do regularly to get better at it." So from the time I was young I would get inspiration – ideas would come from my inner life, my inner being. And I wasn't always sure how that came about, but I was happy when it did. Even as a young person I went inside to reflect, for my ideas to emerge from my inner being, my inner life.



I think it's so important that we guide our children, so that when their questions come up we can provide an answer, facilitate them using the materials and tools safely, and allow them to have the full experience.



Since I've been meditating for the last 26 years, I now understand and appreciate how much I have an inner life and an outer life. And part of my work in my daily life experience is for those to be in balance. Because I meditate, go into my heart and become absorbed in my inner being, I understand how to go there for inspiration to come. So both meditation and art-making are a practice. My meditation and my art-making are two practices that are merging into one actually.

That's fantastic, Jean. What does creativity mean to you? And how do you use it to connect with the world around you? I am passionate in the belief that we're all creative. We're all born with talents to use in this life. And we actually have the responsibility to uncover our talents and where our creativity lies, and to use that in our work and in life, because it helps us reach our potential. So from time to time when I meet people and they say, "Oh, I can't draw a straight line!" or "Oh, I'm not creative," I smile and say, "Of course you are. Everyone's creative; our job is to identify."

So whether we're good at working with people, riding, leading teams, or we feel passionate about performing, exercising, cooking, parenting, or volunteering to accomplish something for the community – those are all creative acts. And when we see them as creative acts I think we're much more likely to produce our best work, our best outcome.

Have you come across any boundaries while exploring your creativity?

A couple of things come to mind. I think it's important for someone who wants to be a serious artist and develop skills and a particular approach to create some boundaries, because we can't do all the different art forms and do one really well. So a part of accepting boundaries is acknowledging, "These are the parameters that I'm going to work within, so that I can get really



When children receive interesting material to work with, and some direction like, "This is the project today," and a caring, kind adult who is creating this experience for them, they naturally respond.

good at this approach and type of work. This really intrigues me, it really calls me, and so I'm going to focus." It's about the focus, a conscious choice that feels right. I will then put my effort, my mind and my heart so that I'm successful.

How do you inspire children to explore creativity in their lives, especially in today's fast-paced technology-driven world?

I think whenever there is a major change in our culture and lifestyle – such as technology that has changed all of our lives – we can embrace that and learn from what we can now do because of it, without being captivated solely by it. For example, when I watch young people use phones and games and other devices, their capacity to move from one focus to another seamlessly is a very wonderful trait for being creative. You can be responsive in the moment to what's actually happening as you're creating something. You're not bound by a drawing or a sketch or an idea you had.

Generally, no matter what's actually unfolding in the moment, you miss it because you're so tied to that original notion. Because art-making is a very active process, so things will happen differently than you anticipate and you're constantly responding in the moment. I think today's children have an amazing capacity to do that compared to when I was young. Whether you're throwing on a wheel or you're dancing or you're doing a meditation walk in a beautiful natural place, you need to focus in order to have the full experience, and to really put all of your energy and intention to the production of the work. So I think children can leverage the capacities these tools are developing, for seamlessly being responsive in the moment and also being able to focus.

I would also say that when children receive interesting material to work with, and some direction like, "This is the project today," and a caring, kind adult who is creating this experience for them, they naturally respond. I think it's so important that we guide our children, so that Because I meditate, go into my heart and become absorbed in my inner being, I understand how to go there for inspiration to come. So both meditation and art-making are a practice.



when their questions come up we can provide an answer, facilitate them using the materials and tools safely, and allow them to have the full experience. Even if it means the particular piece is not finished or does not turn out well, the experience is part of the learning. So I feel that the right combination is for children to have the full experience themselves with loving and kind adults guiding them.

How do you encourage your students to get over their superficial inhibitions and be open to exploring their creativity and potential to the fullest?

When we offer all the different education and training programs, workshops, one-day sessions with families and children, we always include a relaxation technique. Our thought behind that is you can't be both relaxed and fearful at the same time. So a process of relaxation brings the heart and mind into balance, and it's a wonderful way for creativity and inspiration to naturally come to the surface so you can tap into it on any given day. So that simple form of relaxation is how we usually start our day, because it puts us in a good place to begin our work, full of inspiration and joy and excited to see what we will produce today.

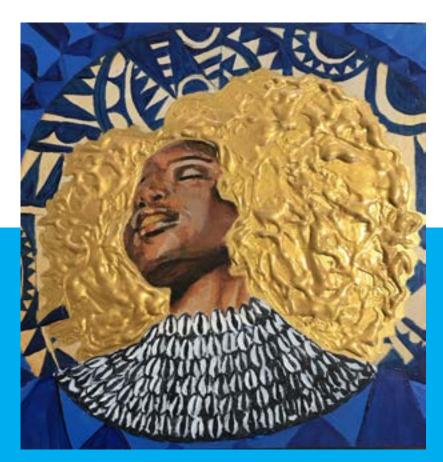
Beautiful. Thank you so much, Jean.

Interviewed by Meghana Anand

## Handisuloui IN BLUE

ASHA ELANA CASEY is a contemporary painter, mixed media artist and arts educator. At the center of her mixed media practice is the idea that spirituality is the point of healing for people of African origin. She currently lives and works in Washington, DC. For more information visit www.elanacaseystudio.com.





While creating 'Handirubvi in Blue', I was considering the spiritual implications of blue in world religions. Mostly I was reflecting on the reverence the gem lapis lazuli held and the image of the Mandorla in Christianity.

My hope is that by using multiple symbols from different religions I can create art that is a center of healing for people of African descent. Generally my art is the amalgamation of symbols of the spiritual practices of African people, most of which stem from Akan, Ifa and Christian cosmology. These symbols are used to portray women as deities, spiritual workers, enlightenment seekers, and ancestors.

Ancestor veneration and cosmograms permeate the work. The cosmograms take the form of geometric abstractions. They illustrate meditation, inner healing and a visual interpretation of the universe. Various texts by African-American authors and feminists influence the process as well.

# oe inspired.

Go forward without a path, Fearing nothing, caring for nothing! Wandering alone, like the rhinoceros! Even as a lion, not trembling at noises, Even as the wind, not caught in the net, Even as the lotus leaf, untainted by water, Do thou wander alone, like the rhinoceros!

—Sutta Nipata of Buddhism





What if someone told you there was a simple set of practices that could help you manage every aspect of your daily life, and at the same time take you to a level of human potential beyond your wildest imagination? Would you be interested? Most people would at least be curious.

That is in fact an accurate explanation of the practices of Yoga, but most people don't realize it. Yoga includes a holistic set of practices for overall self-development and the well-being of the body, mind and soul. A few thousand years back, the great sage Patanjali compiled the current yogic practices of that time into a simple framework consisting of eight parts or limbs, and that framework is still used today. It is known as Ashtanga Yoga.

But the practices of Yoga have evolved since Patanjali was alive, in response to the needs of the time and especially during the last 150 years. So in this series DAAJI explores each limb of Yoga in the light of the modern day yogic practices of Heartfulness. He shows us how to integrate inner spiritual practices with living in the world and refining our personality, so as to create that true state of Yoga – skill in action and integration of the spiritual and worldly aspects of life.

# SAMYAMA part 3

Dharana • Dhyana • Samadhi

*Dhyana*, often translated as meditation, is the centerpiece of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, and through the inner spiritual journey it leads us to *Samadhi*, the original state. In this article, DAAJI focuses on the practice of meditation and how it leads us into *Samadhi*.

#### Meditation is a state of intense inner wakefulness. —The Upanishads

There are two very common images we see of people meditating. The first is that of a practitioner sitting completely erect in one of the traditional cross-legged sitting *Asanas*, mindful, witnessing thoughts, and very alert.

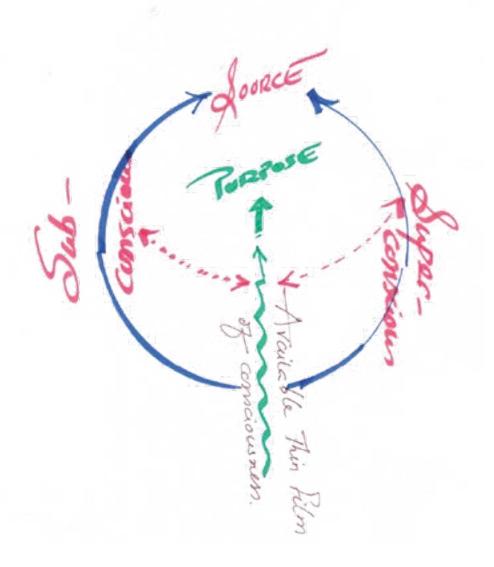
The second is of a practitioner in an absorbed state of *Samadhi*, unconscious of everything around, sometimes in a stone-like state. Again, he or she usually sits in one of the traditional cross-legged *Asanas* but often the head has fallen forward, sometimes even to the ground.

These seem like totally different approaches to meditation – one fully conscious and aware, and the other fully unconscious and absorbed in something that resembles deep sleep. In fact, these are different stages of the meditative process that need to be understood within the overall context of consciousness. What actually happens to our consciousness in meditation? That depends on many factors, some of which we will explore here.

One of those factors is preparation. How do you prepare for meditation? In the last article of this series, we discussed the importance of preparing the night before for morning meditation. Now let's look at the morning meditation process in more detail. First it is important to get settled physically, going to your chosen place of meditation, finding a comfortable posture, relaxing the body, and becoming quiet. Patanjali recommended relaxation as a prerequisite to meditation or Dhyana, because unless your body is relaxed your attention will move from one part of your body to another, as you try to get comfortable. To meditate well, you need to be able to gently close your eyes and passively let things unfold. Arriving at effortlessness combined with a steady and comfortable posture prepares you to plunge into meditation, because you have created the field. If you don't first prepare in this way, if you are rushing or disturbed, how effective will your meditation be? So the first thing is to settle.

What next? The first step of meditation is often defined as thinking about one thing continuously, so usually you would start by gently focusing on the object of your meditation. This is actually the aspect of Ashtanga Yoga we know as *Dharana* – focusing attention, holding and nurturing an idea. Whatever suggestion you make in meditation becomes your goal, your purpose for meditating, and it defines what you will become.

But we often get stuck with this definition of meditation and lose sight of the real purpose of *Dhyana*. In Yoga, meditation is the process of revelation, where the true nature of the object upon which we are meditating is gradually uncovered. Such revelation comes not as thought but as feeling. In meditation we shift from thinking to feeling; from thinking about the Divine to feeling the Divine Presence and then eventually to becoming one with that Presence. It is a journey from the complexity of the mind to the simplicity of the heart and through the heart to the very Center of our being.



#### THE CONSCIOUSNESS SPECTRUM

This journey takes us from the surface level of limited consciousness to deeper levels where we awaken and experience more and more of the full spectrum of superconsciousnessconsciousness-subconsciousness. And so we have different experiences along the way. There are times when we are very alert and aware during meditation, either in stillness or when the mind is turbulent with thoughts, emotions, expectations, desires and concerns. There are other times when we go beyond consciousness into deep sleep-like sushupti states, when we appear to be totally unconscious of what is going, because we have been taken to dimensions that are not in our conscious awareness. There are also dream-like semi-conscious states, where our subconscious is very active. Then there is the ultimate expanded state where consciousness spans the full spectrum from total absorption to total alertness.

And the journey is not linear – it is not that early on we are restless and then we become absorbed or still. In fact, at each stage or point along the way, we will feel some disturbance with the change as we enter a new realm, and then gradually we may become unconsciously absorbed until our consciousness settles in the new place and becomes familiar enough to feel comfortable there. Eventually we will 'own' that place, and we no longer notice anything about it – our consciousness has somehow expanded into that realm. Then it is time to move on to the next point or chakra. So the interplay of settledness and restlessness, of unconscious and conscious *Samadhi*, will be cyclical as we journey onwards and inwards.

Why are some of us able to dive deep into various dimensions of human experience, while others seem to float on the surface, stuck with thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations, and distracted by what is happening around? We can consider the former to be vertical expansion of consciousness into different dimensions of existence, while the latter is horizontal expansion within the same dimension of existence. Both have their place in our evolution, but it is important to know the difference because without vertical growth we do not evolve. If we only stay on the surface, we may become very adept at witnessing our thoughts and emotions, but we will be stuck in a small band of consciousness that is a minute part of our being.

#### THE OBJECT OF MEDITATION

Here the object of our meditation becomes very important: What do we want to become? With what do we identify? We have discussed at length in past articles about the various bodies we possess – the physical body or *sthool sharir*, the subtle body or *sookshma sharir*, also known as the mind, and the causal body or *karan sharir*, also known as the soul. Our bodies and minds are both vehicles for the soul, the cause of our existence, the master of our existence. The mind is the interface between the body and the soul. During meditation, or at any other time for that matter, we can direct our attention towards worldly physical life or to the soul's existence, or we can acknowledge and integrate both, which is the path of Yoga.

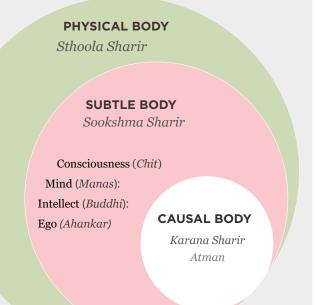
Most importantly, through meditation we experience the master behind the vehicles. We discover firsthand that we are not just the vehicles of body and mind, but also the one using the vehicles. *Pranahuti* or Yogic Transmission facilitates this experience and when that happens our meditation soars. The master within witnesses. The body and mind take their rightful natural place, so that we can identify with the master within, with Reality, with the cause of our existence.

Pranahuti or Yogic Transmission facilitates this experience and when that happens our meditation soars. The master within witnesses. The body and mind take their rightful natural place, so that we can identify with the master within, with Reality, with the cause of our existence.

It is just like a pianist using the piano keys, strings and pedals to play music, but it is obvious that she is none of these things – they are vehicles for her to make music. Regular practice of meditation allows us to understand this difference, as our consciousness observes the mind during meditation.

#### THE THREE BODIES

The repercussions of this are astounding. For example, once we identify with consciousness and the soul, our perception of death changes. Does the soul die? Does consciousness die? Only the body dies, and those aspects of the mind connected directly with the body, like the senses and energy channels. When we leave the physical body it is like removing a set of clothes that no longer fit. Most aspects of the subtle body continue onwards with the soul, and these are the functions that we know as manas (contemplative mind), buddhi (intelligence) and ahankar (ego) along with chit (consciousness); in fact the subtle body departs along with our soul at the moment of death. And once we are pure consciousness, ahankar becomes pure identity. When we witness life, the ego dissolves, whereas when we are busy 'doing' in the world, the ego generally strengthens. The trick is to learn to 'do' without doing, and that is where meditation also comes into play. When we meditate, we are gifted a meditative state. If we are able to carry the consciousness of that state with us



throughout the day into worldly activities, if we let that state ooze from the Center of our being into everything we do, then we learn to 'do' without being the doer.

#### PATANJALI'S SUTRAS

Patanjali describes this concept in his Sutras:

### 4.18: Sada jnatah chitta vrittayah tat prabhu purusasya aparinamitvat

The activities of the mind are always known by pure consciousness, because that pure consciousness is superior to, supports and is the master over the mind. Rather consciousness operates through the mind. The Lord of the mind is unchangeable.

#### 4.19: Na tat svabhasam drishyatvat

Mind is not self-illuminating, as it is the object of knowledge and perception by pure consciousness.

The mind is like the moon that needs the sun to illuminate it. In meditation, when we connect with the Source, pure universal consciousness illuminates the mind, and with Yogic Transmission the mind is very quickly illuminated. As a result, we also become aware when we are not centered, and so we can adjust and recalibrate ourselves. Once we are centered, the master within disciplines and guides our lives.

In the Heartfulness practice, from the beginning we establish a connection with this inner master so that our focus goes directly to the Center of our being, to the Source. It is the same Source as the Source of all things, which is also called the Ultimate, Infinite, Absolute and God. This is the way we bring about vertical expansion in our consciousness during meditation - our focus is on the Center not on the periphery. While we are meditating we are not interested in analyzing our thoughts and how we can do better during the day-to-day happenings of life; we keep that for another time and practice. No, meditation is for diving deeper, as at that time we are interested in expanded consciousness, pure consciousness, dynamic consciousness. For this reason it is also hard to write about the states of meditation, because the language of describing things is of duality and we are going beyond the duality of the mind, beyond mind, beyond even consciousness, to what is behind all of those things - that which transcends duality.

#### SAMADHI

It is through this inner connection that we are able to dive deep in meditation and journey a little further each time, becoming absorbed in various levels of *Samadhi*. *Samadhi* is highly sought after in Yoga. It is the eighth and culminating stage in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga. In the Sutras, Patanjali describes the first level of *Samadhi* as a stone-like consciousness where we are oblivious to what is happening. This is because we have journeyed into those parts of our mind beyond awareness. In the second state we are in a dreamlike subconscious *Samadhi*, and in the third we are fully aware and absorbed simultaneously, which is known as *Sahaj Samadhi*. In Heartfulness, quite quickly we are able to experience the lighter, more evolved states of *Samadhi*.

Sahaj Samadhi is a condition where we are deeply absorbed in meditation, and at the same time fully conscious of everything else that is going on. In the Yoga Shastras, this is known as the *Turiya* condition or the fourth state. Everything is in our view – we are aware of outside noises, the thoughts in our head, and the deepest inner connection with the Source. It is all integrated within us, so that everything becomes an expression of the deepest part of our being. Our consciousness is whole and complete.

We can also take this state out into our day, while we are busy doing other things. We are simultaneously able to focus on work, on the surroundings, on the TV, on something happening outside, and still remain in communion with our inner being. We can also simultaneously witness the Transmission flowing, and any thoughts that arise, and we are able to decide the next step we should be taking. We remain peaceful with all these things happening at the same time. This is known as the *Turiyateet* state in Yoga. It is a state where we have full spectrum consciousness with eyes open. There is no need to focus on any particular thing. The moment we focus on any particular thing, it is no longer meditative but concentration.

#### THE SCIENCE OF MEDITATION

This is not all there is to meditation, as there is a vast science and underlying philosophy behind it, which can best be studied practically. Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur has written:

"People may ask why it is necessary to proceed with meditation at the first stage of Raja Yoga. The answer is quite plain and simple. We are now gathering ourselves at one point so that our individual mind may leave its habit of wandering about. By this practice we set our individual mind on the right path because it is now metamorphosing its habit. When this is done, our thoughts naturally do not go astray." "Meditation is the only thing that can lead you to the end. There is no other means of approaching the Center. We have seen that the one thought arising out of the Center created so big a universe. We have got within us the same central force, though marred by our wrong doings. We utilize the same power, which is automatic in us. We take work from the same force through meditation. This is how we proceed naturally and with Nature's force."



Known to many as Daaji, Kamlesh Patel is the fourth guide in the Heartfulness tradition of meditation. Embracing the many roles of a modern-day teacher, he has that rare capacity to dive deep into the center of his existence in the heart, and simultaneously have a scientific approach to original research in the field of meditation, spirituality and human evolution. He is a prolific speaker and writer, and you can read his latest book, *The Heartfulness Way*. To learn more about Daaji, go to www.daaji.org.

## Unlock Your UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

CLARA SMITH represents her country, Australia, at the international levels in athletics. Here she shares some personal tips for performance, including how to be motivated to exercise regularly, and how to create healthy habits.

The difference between being the person you want to be and the one you are now is strikingly small. All those who perform at their highest level have one thing in common – their attention to detail. They develop exceptional habits and discipline, while others remain in their comfort zone. They are better at making small positive decisions in their daily life. This may not make a difference in a week, but months or years down the track these habits will become stronger, and the effect can be phenomenal.

Since neither habits nor discipline are acquired from birth, it is not a question of talent. It is a question of choice. Discipline is the foundation of success in any domain. It is waking up early, it is treating people the way you want to be treated, and it is doing the tasks you do not necessarily feel like doing. When we begin to view discipline as training rather than a punishment, we will be traveling on a very positive pathway.

From my view, an endurance athlete is the perfect example of someone who unites the mind, body and heart into one. One of the reasons many people never get around to going to the gym is because they know the physical pain ahead and give up. If we take the approach from a regulated mind, however, we learn to fight the mental battle first which makes the physical one easier. In fact, many say the hardest part of a training session is getting out of bed and getting to the gym, whereas an athlete knows to be consistent. Once you begin, your body reacts naturally, and you push harder and harder until you reach 100%. An athlete knows that once you develop a routine it will get easier. Therefore, successful exercise starts in the mental ring.

#### So how do we achieve this mental stability?

One can have no greater mastery than mastery over oneself. For this we need two wings to fly, the spiritual and the material. By only mastering success in the material sphere there is one problem: success comes and goes. You may have a well-paid job, wealth and be a successful athlete. However, all of this can be lost. You might lose your job, your money, or you might get a career-ending injury. This is why many athletes become depressed after their sporting career and spotlight end, and they are left in a different space that is yet unknown to them, which is their inner self. Therefore we need to focus on who we are inside of us as well as our successes.

Heartfulness Meditation and other techniques have helped me to improve my physical and mental wellbeing. There is a beautiful quote by William Penn: "True silence is the rest of the mind; and is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment." In addition to this, meditation actually causes our body to change on a cellular level. According to research published in *Frontiers in* 

the with

*Immunology*, meditation has the ability to reverse molecular reactions in our DNA that lead to stress, poor health and depression. These new findings have created a shift, putting newfound power in our hands. By committing to 10 to 20 minutes of meditation every day we can improve our health, reduce stress, be more focused and have a greater sense of purpose.

My challenge to you is to step out of your usual routine and to try meditation to regulate the mind from thinking to feeling, and to unlock this untapped potential inside of you.

The world is like a mountain, The echo depends on you, If you scream good things, The world will give it back, If someone speaks badly about you, Speak well about him, Change your heart to change the world. – SHAMS-I-TABRIZI

# taste of life

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

—Proverbs, The Bible







PART 2

In part 2 of his interview, DR GARY HUBER continues to share his thoughts with VICTOR KANNAN on the effects of meditation on health and well-being.



## **Q** Do you recommend meditation for children?

Yes, and I think it's important that as adults we realize that children are very smart and they can inculcate a lot of things if we just speak to them. We can't always treat them like babies. We can talk to them about food, and they'll understand. We can talk to them about meditation and mindfulness, and they will understand. They get it because they have a better idea, a better concept of it than we do.

## Q Interesting!

When they are coloring, or during quiet playtime, they are not distracted, they are not multitasking, so they're at meditation from a very young age. I taught my kids to meditate when they were about 9 or 10 years of age, and I would have taught them earlier had I known about it. But I really wasn't aware of it. It starts with a conversation. You keep talking about it, and it seems very natural because it is very natural. I think it's important for kids, especially in this day and age with the iPhone just celebrating its 10-year anniversary. They're immersed in this whole concept that 24 hours a day digital images have to be coming at their brains and they literally have to dodge all of this incoming information. How are they going to do that? This is deletion mode.

Go back hundreds of years, what did Da Vinci do? To learn something new, he had to get on a horse, ride to a new town and hope to meet someone smart or find a book he hadn't seen before. He had to go out and seek information. Now it's being thrown at them at such an incredible pace that if we don't teach our kids how to meditate and how to quiet their brains and be calm, the influx of all that digital information is going to crush them. That's my concern.

Q Do you think that the current age that we live in adds to diseases such as ADD and ADHD? Absolutely. We see autoimmune diseases on the rise and we see degenerative diseases going through the roof at an incredible pace. They are multiplying tenfold in one generation. You mentioned ADD.

I ask parents, "Your son is diagnosed with ADD. You know what that stands for?"

When they say, "Yes, Attention Deficit..."

I tell them it stands for Accumulated Dumb Decisions. ADD is not a disease.

I walk them through these questions: "What lab tests were run to diagnose these diseases?"

"None."

"What X-rays were done? What CT scans were done to make that diagnosis?"

"None."

"So let me get this right. They just looked at a list of symptoms and said the child is inattentive, he has trouble at school, he has outbursts."

These are just symptoms, and they stamp a diagnostic code on it. The child doesn't have anything. He has a challenge, but the question is why does he behave with this list of symptoms? That's all they are, symptoms.

It really comes down to what I consider to be Accumulated Dumb Decisions. We feed children wheat and sugar and crackers and fruit roll-ups and processed garbage. We don't give them vegetables, because they don't like them. We don't give them beans, and we give them what one mother called 'kid food'. And what's kid food? Hot dogs, macaroni and cheese and processed garbage. We feed them junk, then we put them in front of a video game for three hours and have lights flashing in their eyes, and then we let them stay up late and they don't get sleep. What do you think that brain is going to do? Do you think that brain is going to be calm? No, it's going to be all over the place.

So the decisions that we make as parents about what we expose our kids to are important. At least in the United States, exposing our kids to meditation is a foreign concept.

C Have you seen children benefiting from meditation, especially in their ADD scores and things like that? Well, I consistently recommend it to my patients, but how many of them engage in it consistently and come back is a challenge. So, no, I can't say that I have seen it reducing ADD scores, but I've seen it in my own kids. My son was in high school and he was having a very challenging soccer match that afternoon, and he was very nervous about it. He said, "Dad, I meditated for five minutes and I felt much better and I think it helped me to play well." I was shocked, not that it worked but that he had actually heard me and did what we had talked about at home. And I do have some kids who come in and say, "Yes, I meditate. I do find it helpful." I know it works. Often times with kids it's just about getting the parents to reinforce and make it happen.

Q Modern lifestyle is out of balance. We eat junk food, we sleep less, and we stress out. We are unbalancing ourselves actively, or even mindlessly or unmindfully. So what is the one thing that we can do to understand that we are unbalanced? Second, what can we do to rebalance ourselves?

For them to understand they are imbalanced, ask them some simple questions: "Do you think it's reasonable not to sleep and expect to have energy? Do you treat your car better than you treat your machine, yourself? You take your car for an oil change every 3,000 miles, you get regular check-ups, and you rotate the tires. What do you do for yourself? What kind of oil are you putting in your engine?" When I ask those questions they say, "Yes, but I have to do these bad things because I'm so busy. I have kids, it's my job and all these demands."

But I gently coax them, "Who put all those demands in your life? Who is this bad person who makes you do all this? You are."

We are ultimately responsible.

Many of us are so married to our ego. When I say this, people respond, "Are you saying that I am egotistical?" No, we all have an ego, which is never at rest. Ego is always fearing or wanting; it's always chasing after something or running away from something. So much of our life is spent in the ideology that we have to be a certain thing or drive I think it's important that as adults we realize that children are very smart and they can inculcate a lot of things if we just speak to them. We can't always treat them like babies. We can talk to them about food, and they'll understand. We can talk to them about meditation and mindfulness, and they will understand. They get it because they have a better idea, a better concept of it than we do.

a certain car or be in a certain club – that's the ego. If we can separate ourselves from that and really take comfort in silence, take comfort in who we are, take comfort in the simple pleasures of life, life begins to slow down. It has a comfort level and a satisfaction that we are never going to obtain by being married to our ego. We are not going to buy anything from the mall that's going to make us as happy as the present moment.

So trying to introduce these concepts, which are a natural part of meditation, is a way I can encourage people to eat better, to exercise, but if you are not willing to change your approach to life and take control of it, then I think you're always going to struggle.

#### Q Some people don't know which meditation system to choose. What would you recommend?

I think there are multiple ways to meditate. I'm a very big fan of the Heartfulness approach, but I also concede that Transcendental Meditation and Mindfulness Meditation and other forms are all awesome. They are great gateways and they have a lot of commonalities and overlaps. So find a path you are comfortable with. The key is to get in the pool. It's like exercise: there is no perfect exercise. There are all kinds of ways to move your body. Find out what works for you.

Q Do you have any advice for young doctors who are coming into the medical field, especially in this age of new diseases, new challenges and new lifestyle choices?

My advice to young people coming into medicine is that we're are always going to need thoracic surgeons, we're always going to need emergency room doctors, we need traditional medical doctors, but I would love for every physician out there to have some understanding of integrated medicine. We are not taught that in med school. If somebody is going into family practice or internal medicine or something a little more general, then I would love to insert this in medical school training. That's the whole idea of the integrative approach, of using meditation as a tool. I would also love to insert nutritional training.

I have some young physicians in residency who are looking at the integrative model, and they talk to their patients about sleep, diet, meditation and exercise. I don't know what it would take to really implement this on a broader scale other than what Heartfulness is already doing by putting the message out there, and hopefully more and more of my colleagues will grab hold of it.

There is a growing interest. I lecture for the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine and also the Metabolic Medicine Institute of the George Washington University, and physicians are coming in to learn about integrative medicine.

#### *C* I am impressed with the information that we find at www.nih.gov. They publish a number of studies and promote meditation for health.

There is literature out there. There are 120 research articles about MRI studies on people who meditate and seeing changes. That's pretty hard science. That's just MRIs, and there are hundreds of other studies. So there is evidence.

## **Q** What is your take on the heart-brain connection?

You cannot live without either one!

Q [Laughter] | like this about you – your quick sense of humor!

Life shouldn't be boring; boring is no fun.

Q People talk about meditating on the brain, meditating on the heart, meditation affecting the brain, affecting heart rate variability etc.

Everything affects everything. Stress lowers thyroid performance, it lowers sex hormones, it increases blood sugar. It affects your brain and it affects sleep. Heart and brain are just two organs, two pieces of the puzzle, and they are communicating with thousands of signals per minute back and forth.

Meditation impacts the vagus nerve. We have the parasympathetic, our calm, cool, groovy side, and we have the sympathetic side: "Go, go, go! Run, accomplish, take the hill!"Those signals are fed back and forth between the brain and heart on a second-by-second basis. Meditation affects heart rate variability, beat to beat, the time difference between each individual beat. We measure that and see that meditation improves it. I don't think you can't separate heart and brain, as they're so intertwined.

Consciousness and thought are not just in your brain; every cell in your body has a consciousness. When we understand that, we know that every part of our body plays in this. You know we are nothing but a ball of energy. These energies are moving and fluxing in different ways, and often in ways that we can't even measure. All thought isn't just in the brain; all parts are communicating in some way.

*Q* Do you think meditation helps in relationships?



If you are meditating and calmer, you tend to make better choices. You tend to be more open to get your work out in that day. And if you're ultimately stressed, nothing good happens, nothing changes. So I think it's kind of a doorway that pulls you into a better existence.

Oh yes. Relationships are built upon how comfortable and confident I am with myself. If I am stressed and I'm married to my ego and I've my own self-doubts and I'm scattered and wanting and fearing, I'm going to be a much more difficult person to have a relationship with. It will be easier to have a relationship with somebody who is calm and can experience joy in the moment.

C The ideas of empathy and deep listening are all essential parts of the social skills one needs.

To feel benevolent, have empathy, and understand somebody's situation, you have to let go of your self focus and open yourself to other people's experiences. Meditation has helped me do that in my own personal life. I grew up in a loving household with five kids, a mother and a father. You would say, "Ah, it's a typical American family!" My mom, God bless her, tried hard. She did a lot of good things, but she was a very judgmental person, and I learnt that from a young age. I was pretty harsh in my twenties, with black and white ideas of what the truth is; I wasn't an open-minded thinker. Learning to meditate has really helped me to morph and change my physiology, to be more benevolent, open-minded and accepting.

Q: That's an example of how epigenetics affects us. The choices that we make are not the end of the story; we can change who we are and what we do.

Yes, at any point in time!

## Q It is not that we are born with a certain destiny; we can change it.

I agree with that statement 100%. Destiny is whatever you decide it to be. You have infinite control. On a dime you can decide to think in a different way, you can decide to be more open-minded, and it opens doors and changes the path of your life.

## Q What is your simple prescription for everyday life?

That's a great question. I often tell my patients, "Look, life is really pretty simple; we complicate it. We can make it as complicated or as simple as we like."

My prescription to you is that we need four basic things to be healthy and happy:

- We need good food.
- We need sleep as our body detoxifies, our brain recharges itself, our whole body is ready for the new day if it's given sleep.
- We need some basic movement, some exercise. Our body is meant to move.
- And the last thing is to manage stress.

If you do those four things your body will function naturally. Simplify your life. Instead we are more than happy to overcommit, overstretch, overstress, eat garbage, and do all the wrong things.

Managing stress means letting go. Managing stress means meditation and exercise. Those are the things we do to manage stress, because the opposite of stress is the pursuit of passion. Pet the puppy, hug your wife, be with your children, fish if you like fishing, but do something that makes you giggle, do something that makes you smile. There has to be that pursuit of passion to offset the other side of the equation. That's my prescription.



Heartfulness

# ENHANCING MEMORY & CREATIVITY

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# HIDDEN Garden



**KAYLAN MICHAEL,** aka Lost in the Island, is a multidisciplinary artist who currently resides in Montreal, Canada. Her art has been described as spiritual, mysterious, abstract, electric and futuristic. Instagram @lost\_intheisland



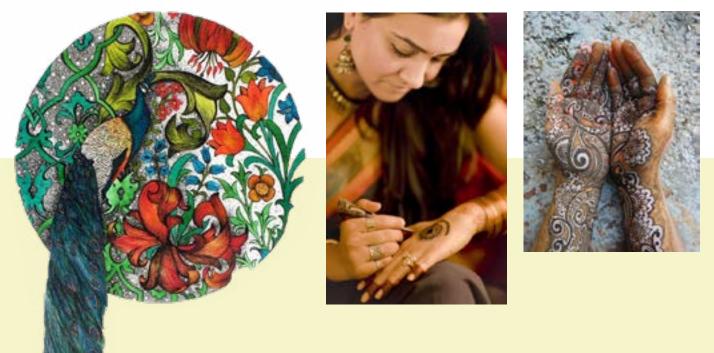
The motivation behind my art is to break the rules and not fit into any box, while building self-expression. I am inspired by Life – experiences, science, fashion, music, the universe, spirituality and nature. I'm drawn by my inner-me, my mood, and the moment of the day. It's therapeutic and it's a way of releasing the creative spirit. Fellow independent artists also inspire me to create more.

To create a collage or artwork, I first decide the mood, which could be based on my state of mind at the moment, a situation that occurred before, or something not yet expressed. Then I write a short poem, which helps to decide which element will be in the artwork and how the overall energy will feel. Then I sketch a few ideas out to visualize these thoughts, and select the main image to create. My imagination carries me. I usually work with women's portraits. Lastly, I start creating in Photoshop. I often have new ideas along the way, so I go with the flow and allow my emotions to come out during the creative process. From Photoshop I then bring the final collage to Lightroom for a photo retouch. Each piece is a part of me that is shared.

'Hidden Garden' represents growth. Being able to keep pushing forward regardless of the dark times is strength. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

EMPRACE WHAT IS

With a degree in textile designing and a keen interest in sharing the traditional art of henna, HUMNA MUSTAFA started her journey professionally around 20 years ago. She grew up in the Middle East, and moved to Australia where she has had a lot of time to experiment, develop her art and evolve. She chooses to live by Picasso's words: "The meaning of life is to find your gift, and the purpose of life is to give it away." Instagaram @humnamustafa



My art is very much what I feel. It's personal, real and purely a reflection of myself in that moment. As I draw on a body with henna, I start creating the patterns that reflect the energy of the person on whom I draw. On coming back into my space, I use the elements to narrate my story on paper. My henna healing on people is my inspiration. I look beyond the skin, deeper into the person, and narrate their story in patterns that reflect how to let go of the past, deal with the present and be prepared for the future.

The more I connect to people by seeing their energy through my patterns, the more I connect to my true self. I came across the Welsh word hiraeth, which means 'nostalgia', or more commonly 'homesickness', and that became the definition of how I feel. I am able to see myself over the years and what truly resides in my core.

I chose the male peacock. The painting speaks about not looking ahead, not searching for more, not needing much, and embracing what is. With no agitation or a desire to fly away anywhere, it is possible to sit and just enjoy the feeling of being. It truly is about making a home within before making it out in this world, for when the home is inside the world becomes just that, making it easy to embrace what is.

## BREAKFAST Alkaline Smoothie

#### SERVES:

2 persons

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

2 big handfuls spinach
1 big lemon without peel
1 green pepper
1 avocado
A little peace of fresh ginger, grated
A nip of Himalaya salt
2 to 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp hempseeds or chia seeds
1 cup fresh clean water (less water for a smoothie bowl)
Blend it all and add the oil last

#### **TOPPINGS:**

Hempseeds and/or chia seeds. For newcomers to an alkaline diet, add a little fruit, e.g. red grapefruit, watermelon or berries.

#### **REPLACEMENTS:**

Green pepper = cucumber Avocado = less water or more oil and more greens Olive oil = extra virgin coconut oil Spinach = any green leaves, salads and green kale

Photos & recipes by SIMONNE HOLM Alkaline-Institute.com









Thank you Mother Earth for giving me this beautiful, nourishing, live-changing clean food. I feel the Earth, I feel the sun and the water and the oxygen all contributing to our life on Earth. I respect it and thankfully I prepare the food with all my love, and serve it for my beloved who will feel the light of the food.

#### SIMONNE

Heartfulness Jogasanas

PACHIMOTTANASANA

#### Stage |

Come to Dandasana.

Open the legs and stretch them as far apart as possible without bending your knees. Try to bring both legs to approx. a 90-degree angle.

Breath in and raise your arms up.

Breathe out, bend forward and place the palms on to the ground.

Bend your body forward as far as possible and try to touch your forehead on the ground. Feel the stretch at the inner part of the thighs.

Maintain the posture with gentle, long and deep breaths, in and out six times.

Breathe in, slowly come up.

#### Stage II

Breathe out and bend towards your left side, forehead touching your knee, palms holding the toes.

Feel the stretch at the inner part of the thighs.

Maintain the posture with gentle, long and deep breaths, in and out six times.

Breathe in, slowly come up.

Breathe out and bend towards your right side, forehead touching your knees, palms holding the toes.

Feel the stretch at the inner part of the thighs.

Maintain the posture with gentle, long and deep breaths, in and out six times.



#### Breathe in, slowly come up.

Breathe out and release arms sideways.

#### Stage III

#### Sit in Dandasana.

Breathe in and stretch both your arms up above your head.

Breathe out, and retaining the stretch bend forward from the hips, with the head and trunk as far forward as possible, reaching for your toes.

Keep your head between your shoulders and feel the stretch of the spinal column. Try to bring the chest as close to the thighs as possible.

Bring the forehead down and try to rest the forehead on the knees. Keep the knees straight and hold the feet together.

Relax the back muscles, hold and stay in the position with gentle, long and deep breaths, in and out six times.

Breathe in and stretch the arms up.

Breathe out, bring the arms down; release the posture and relax in *Sithila Dandasana*.





#### BENEFITS

*Pachimottanasana* stretches the whole spinal column, tones the spinal muscles and the associated nerves.

The *asana* stretches the back of the whole body, from the heels to the top of the spine.

Improves the efficiency of the spinal nerves.

Loosens the hip joints.

Tones and massages the abdominal organs - the liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys and adrenal glands.

Helps to remove excess fat deposit from the abdominal region and thighs.

Helpful for digestive disorders. Strengthens the digestive organs and tract.

Regulates the functions of the pancreas which controls carbohydrate metabolism and blood sugar levels. Thus, it helps to cure diabetes.

Reproductive organs are toned.

# THE DESK of Daaji

Religion

\* Dorrarging many times during 24 hours.

\* I' dominatio.

\* It is all about learning.

\* often life antaginistic.

It- lands to divide itsuf from material existence.

Spirituality

\* Heart is yielding 24 hours towards devoted worship.

\* "WE" is the key attitude.

× Il- is abouturlearning.

\* Transund, both life affirmation as well as antafonism.

\* It is all about integrating both wrys of material Spiritual existance.

Religion

YATRA or pilgimage is often undertaken to places.

Spirituality

\* YATEA or Pilfrimage is always INTERMA traversing form one chafra' to another

. It's generally heavier approach.

: One remains attached to Forms

× Worships are offered in PROXY done on behavef.

\* Approach always become subtler subtles.

K It is about moving beyond both Form & formlessness. \* You are the worshippen. No one CAN DO IT ON YOUR BEHALF.

d. S



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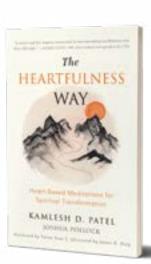
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Masterclasses will be available online each day after you sign up and accessible throughout the day. Each class runs between 35 and 45 minutes.

will teach you the practical

benefits of daily meditation.

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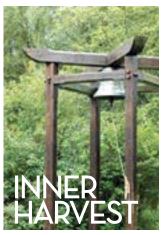
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