

March 2018

# heartfulness

Simply living



POTENTIAL, THE NATURE OF BEING Michael Singer on the world,  
mind and heart, AGRO-ECOLOGY An exclusive interview with Pierre Rabhi

# Heartfulness

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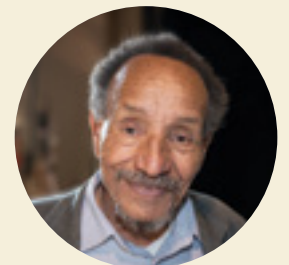
## Michael Singer

Michael is the author of *The Untethered Soul* and *The Surrender Experiment*, which have been published worldwide. He had a deep inner awakening in 1971 after which he focused on yoga and meditation for some time. In 1975, he founded Temple of the Universe, a yoga and meditation center where people of any religion or belief come to experience inner peace. He is also the creator of a leading-edge software package for medical practice management, and is the founding CEO of a public company.



## Pierre Rabhi

Born in Algeria, Pierre Rabhi is a French farmer, writer and philosopher. He promotes a way of life that respects both humankind and nature, and works to promote agro-ecology throughout the world, particularly in Africa. Recognized as an international expert on food safety, he participated in the drafting of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. He has created many associations with the goal of reconnecting people to nature, and personally embodies his philosophical ideals to inspire people to make changes in their lives.



## Félicie Toczé

After training in France, Japan, England and Australia, Félicie became a food consultant, home chef and caterer. She gives private and group cooking classes in Paris and the provinces of France. She has developed a balanced, sensitive and creative approach, and her exquisite presentation and taste for shapes and colors make her kitchen a source of inspiration that opens us to the richness and infinite variety of vegetarian cuisine. After having published *La Cuisine Santé des 5 Saisons* and *Japonismes*, she is preparing a new book devoted to rice.





Elizabeth Denley, Rishabh Kothari  
Meghana Anand, Sylvie Berti Rossi  
Genia Catala, Emma Ivaturi

| pə(ʊ)ˈtɛnʃ(ə)l |

Dear readers,

In this issue we explore the nature of potential. Capacity. Qualities. It is so easy to fall into the trap of trying to be something other than what we are. Yet we are unique, emerging into what we ought to become. Potential comes from within. As one of our authors says, “We are our own inspiration. When everyone’s uniqueness is brought together, the diversity in each brings forth unity.... We inspire each other.” It all begins by being ourselves.

To help us on our way, Daaji celebrates the purpose and benefits of Asana, author Michael Singer shares some thoughts about the nature of our inner and outer worlds, and Pierre Rabhi narrates his transcendental journey, inspired by his roots in Algeria, Socrates’ philosophy and his love of nature, all of which have contributed to his unique role as a global pioneer in agro-ecology. Dr Crystal Jones talks about the importance of inner guidance in healing, Félicie Toczé explains how to best utilize the five elements in the food we eat, and Adam Yasmin captures the beauty and calming nature of the tea ceremony. Enjoy!

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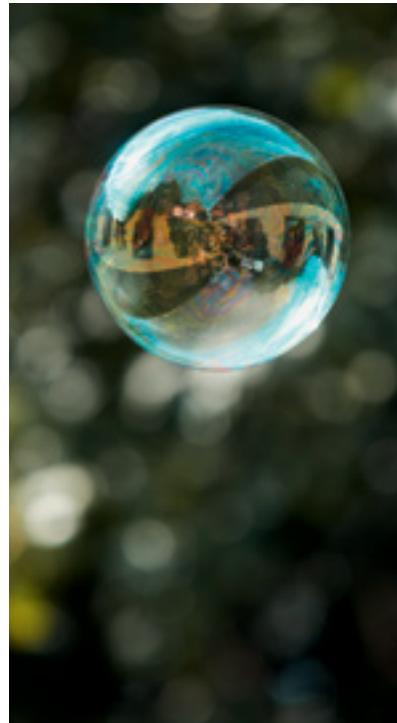
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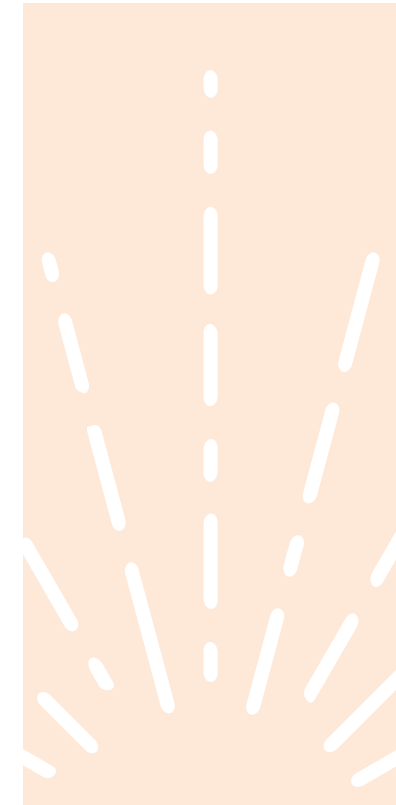


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IN THE FIELD

# Green Kanha movement

## EACH ONE, TEACH ONE, TO PLANT ONE

The Green Kanha Initiative is an environmental initiative committed to nurturing India's mega bio-diversity, including the fast-disappearing indigenous and endangered species. We adopt the latest technologies with scientific planning to create an ex-situ conservation center replete with resplendent green spaces. 'Each one, Teach One, How to Plant One' has been a significant campaign in this journey, enabling the plantation of more than a 100,000 trees on campus so far.

### OUR STORY

The locus of the Green Kanha Movement is a spiritual retreat center we call Kanha Shantivanam. Located in the dry and arid environs of Ranga Reddy District, Telangana, on the Deccan Plateau, with fast depleting groundwater and tracts of dry barren land, there was an urgent need to take action. In the month of April 2017, a handful of environmentally conscious volunteers started the work with



love, hope and a passion to restore the lush green spaces.

At Kanha, ecologically, economically and socio-culturally important native tree species are grown. An arboretum of medicinal trees, a germplasm bank of the tree species from peninsular India with seedling orchards, and clonal seed orchards are being set up. Several hundred trees that were cut down due to

road-widening projects have been translocated to Kanha and found a new lease of life.

Today, this ecological movement has inspired citizens from all over the world. Forgoing differences of nationality, language, race, class and gender, together we strive to create resplendent green spaces where the beneficial vibratory fields generated by trees resonate an ideal inner environment.



### VISION

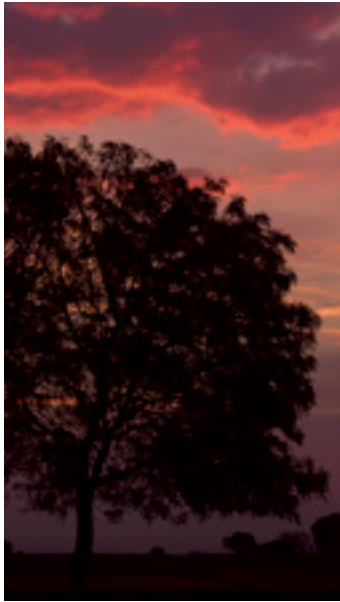
The Nature-Forward Movement: Envisioning a space, where humankind co-exists with the rest of nature in harmony.

We live in a world where the excesses of technology have taken us away from our roots. Today, parents take children to the mall instead of for a walk around a lake. Our lives in the metropolis are determined by the pace of the mechanical clock, and the unthinking urgency of action. In this rush, we forget to pause, observe and learn from nature. The 'narratives of progress' that we follow are unsustainable and inflict violence all around us, destabilizing the delicate balance that Mother Earth has carefully crafted for her children.



At Kanha Shantivanam, nature exists in awe-inspiring stillness and beauty. The Green Kanha movement is continuing to co-create a space where people and nature co-exist in harmony, and where people are able to learn lessons from nature, so integral for their own experience of a balanced evolution.

In September 2012, the World Congress of the International Union of Nature passed a resolution declaring that children had the right to experience the natural world. This declaration has been instrumental in inculcating environmental morality in the generations to come. Kanha is home to the many generations of the future, that will seek to actively recreate peace and harmony in the world by cultivating a culture of synchronicity and a loving relationship with nature.



### ACTIVITIES

We have already undertaken a variety of green initiatives, including:

### TREE AND PLANTATION EFFORTS

- Afforestation and reforestation of trees considered sacred and beneficial in traditional health systems.
- Landscaping efforts that give emphasis to ecologically, economically and socio-culturally important native tree species of the region.
- Developing an arboretum of medicinal trees and herb gardens.
- A germplasm bank of the important trees of peninsular India with seedling orchards and clonal seed orchards.

- An in-house nursery currently with around 200,000 saplings.
- Translocation of trees felled for road-widening projects in the city to designed avenues in Kanha.
- An organic vegetable farm that caters to the food needs at Kanha.

#### WATER CONSERVATION

- The constructed wetlands methodology is used to treat waste water at Kanha in a natural and eco-friendly way with zero power consumption.
- A rainwater harvesting system of storage tanks and reservoirs is prepared at multiple locations before the onset of the monsoon rains each year.
- An advanced drip irrigation system is already in place. Further research is making it simpler, and more eco-friendly and sustainable.
- Natural irrigation ponds are set up throughout the campus, of which five are being further widened and deepened to cover the entire catchment area.

#### OTHER GREENING EFFORTS

- Waste management, segregating food and plant waste, various recyclable materials and disposable waste.
- An organic composting system that converts food and plant

waste into fertilizer for the gardens.

- A fly-ash brick plant, which manufactures bricks that are relatively clean and minimally polluting instead of conventional clay bricks. Nearly 1.2 million bricks have been produced in the last year.
- Solar power for the meditation center, residential colonies, street lamps and other major structures. Solar power is also being explored for farming techniques. Soon, this initiative will have about a 1 megawatt capacity.

#### GET INVOLVED

The Green Kanha initiative invites your valuable contributions both at a personal and corporate level. Individuals contribute by sponsoring trees, actively volunteering in the plantation efforts on site, and offering their professional sustainable expertise at Kanha Shantivanam. Corporates are participating as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programs. <http://kanha.sahajmarg.org/green-kanha>



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We are searching  
for the potentiality  
which creates  
consciousness.

*Ram Chandra of  
Shahjahanpur*

focus:  
**POTENTIAL**

# 3

## questions on POTENTIAL

Everyday perspectives



1

What do you feel  
is your true or  
innermost potential?

2

What does potential  
mean to you? Has it  
changed during your  
life?

3

How do you cultivate  
and nurture your  
potential?



It is so much easier to recognize potential in other people, as we see them without the filters of our ego. In the West, we recognize human growth and development from a scientific, left-brained perspective. We map and standardize humans from birth to 'normal' adulthood. We design schools to develop human potential in every domain and knowledge. The more domains we embrace, the better rounded we are considered to be.

What about the soul? Traditionally it has been the domain of religion, but unfortunately the religious systems have become too structured, keeping the spiritual aspect from people. Over the past century, a new movement of Transpersonal Psychology started. It was not limited to the 'normal' but also included the exceptional and optimal. Those who could reach their own potential would share

with their direct circle. Those who wanted more 'hands on' theology shared with their community and served the needy.

Reaching our potential is like harvesting rainwater to quench our thirst and the thirst of the ones around us, while carrying their weight and responsibility. Knowing that there are others out there, who can join our efforts in creating a network of availability and love, is like tapping directly into the Source. This kind of networking also relieves worries.

TINA FEGHALI  
Dubai, UAE



Potential is the knowledge of the Self. Over time, the knowledge of our potential generates bliss – our activities generate within us a feeling of good, a feeling of delivery, a happiness that makes us reach out to the Self again and again. It can be the act of painting, dancing, reading, running, or anything. It's the discovery of our talents. But without the right attitude, potential has no framework.

The feeling that I could perform certain things initiated a journey in my childhood itself. My mother taught me to draft a picture of a house with a beautiful garden and this launched me into the creative orbit. And from seeking to be an artist my journey set me on an allied trajectory of becoming an art writer, a curator and a creator of the plastic arts. Looking back, my potential didn't change much, but it certainly seemed to expand. The constant pursuit of using my ability to paint and draw created my future path. It was my mother again who encouraged me to complete my MA in Literature, and this expression directed me to write, curate and open up the complicated world of contemporary arts to my audience.



I am still exploring my innermost potential to see the cosmos in this earthly existence; the reason we are here in the first place; the feeling of aligning with all that is noble and spiritual; and the ability to connect with the largeness of the potential within me and around me. The day I can expand myself to see no distinctions – maybe that will be a new enlightenment, that would redirect me to my potential in all aspects of life.

ATIYA AMJAD  
Hyderabad, India



Potential is hidden inside. It needs to be awakened. It can be a quality, a behavioral trait or a mere presence that makes a sea of change.

Possible  
Opportunity  
Time  
Energy  
Now  
Time  
Inspire  
Ability  
Love



Be in the **NOW**, so that we know ourselves. Then, we know and understand others, and make a difference in their lives.

**TRY** till we succeed. We become content, which in turn helps us to find happiness.

**INSPIRE** each other. Diversity in unity, and unity in action towards a common goal leads to success.

**ABILITY** is the wisdom to act. Our ability grows with experience, age and maturity and provides us with the insight to differentiate, choose and inspire.

**LOVE** is the uniting factor in this universe; anything can be conquered by love, helping us find our true potential.

**ESWAR ANANDAN**  
Hyderabad, India

Potential is what is **POSSIBLE**. It is the understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, so that together we can do what is otherwise impossible.

We come across **OPPORTUNITIES**. Potential helps us choose the right ones; in fact, the doors of opportunity open by themselves.

Understand the right **TIME** to act – never too early, never too late. When the right time approaches we can actively participate rather than just wait and watch.

Utilize **ENERGY** to the fullest. We are filled with infinite energy, and channeling energy is an important outcome of knowing our true potential.

Potential is something ever changing and evolving. Life is about uncovering that potential which is mostly hidden latent inside us, and who knows how deep that can go. I think in general people greatly underestimate their own capacities.



I think sometimes difficulties can be great in bringing out our hidden potential. When life goes well we might get too busy proving there's no need for change. But situations that force us to give up both the positive and negative concepts we have of ourselves are opportunities for our true potential to emerge.

Another thing for nurturing potential is of course a supportive environment.

**LAURA LAINE**  
Helsinki, Finland



In the winter days when all are resting, nature is hard at work. Somewhere in the forest an acorn is struggling to become an oak tree.

Starting out as a flower, slowly growing into an acorn, the tree's fruit, she is happy to live forever peacefully with her sisters and brothers under the care of their mother. But things never stay the same.

Soon enough the weather starts to change, turning summer into autumn and then the cold winter. The acorn keeps holding onto her branch, but then notices that all her sisters and brothers are gone. In a moment of surrender, she also lets go of her branch, preparing for her end. But to her surprise the fall does not kill her. Instead, she has a feeling of freedom, while her shell begins to crack open. The acorn falls asleep under the fallen leaves for the whole winter.

When spring comes she wakes, feeling the rain and warm soil that has covered her. In a moment of infinite possibilities she witnesses only the possibility of succeeding, while in her heart singing, "Let there be light!"

Sprouting into a bud, she continues to stretch her arms until, one day, the sound of squirrels

catches her attention. When she looks around she is no longer a tiny acorn but a fully-grown oak tree with her own emerald coat. With joy she becomes aware of every little acorn she now carries in her arms, wondering what will happen to them – whether they will have the courage to surrender to their full potential.



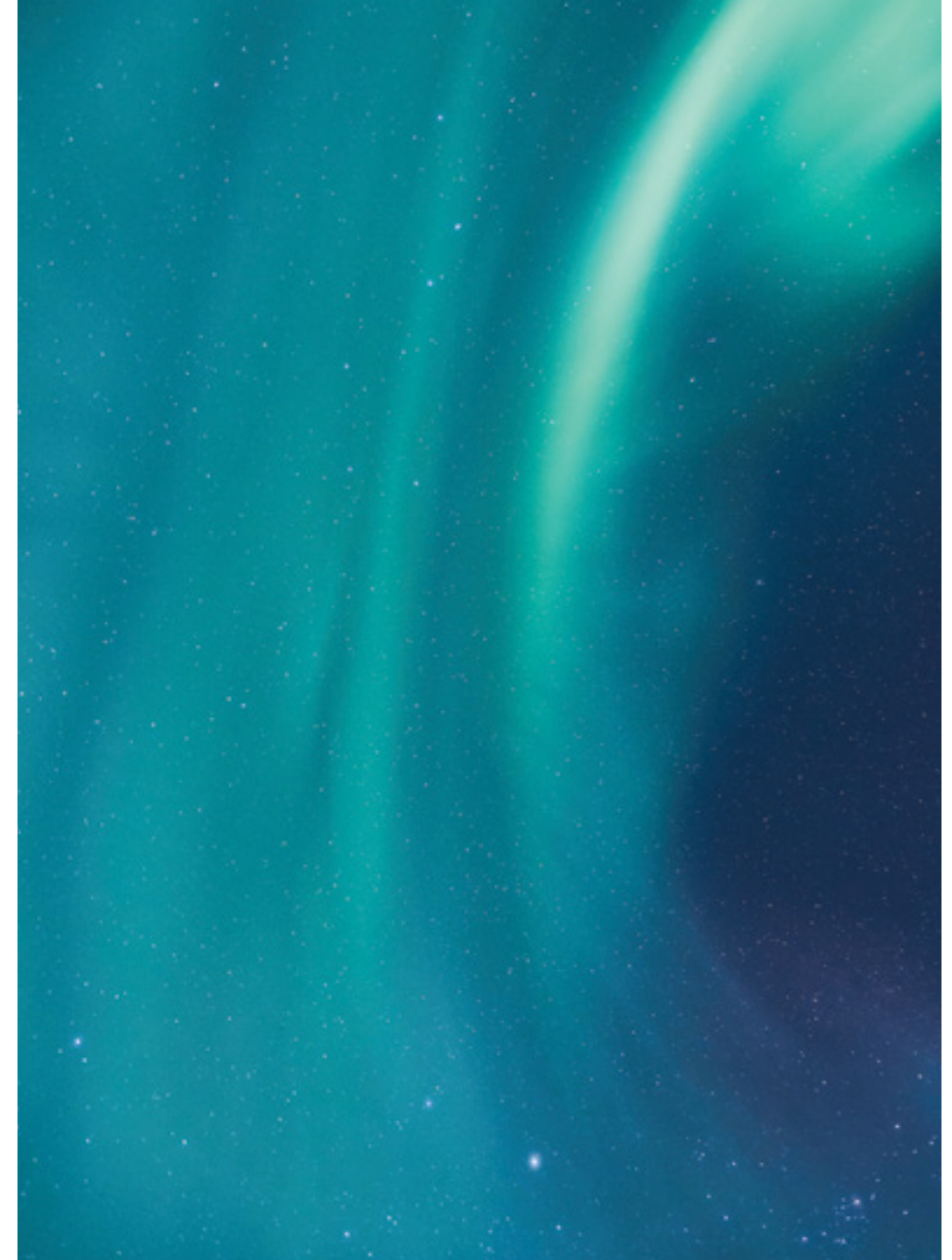
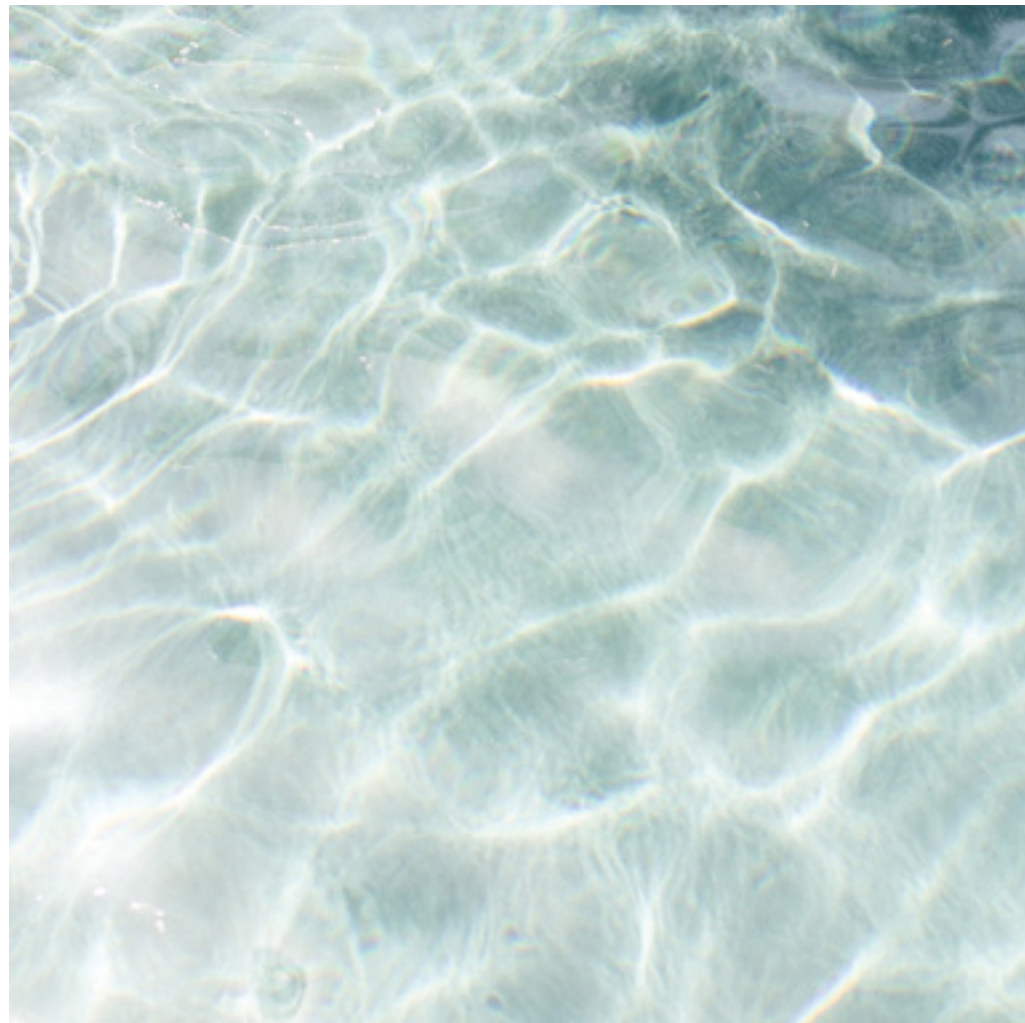
**ELIZA UNGER**  
Hunedoara, Romania

To reach our potential, our fullest potential, our highest potential, we do not need to gain anything.... we need to unfold everything.

# *Consciousness &* P O T E N T I A L I T Y

DAAJI share some thoughts on potentiality from the spiritual perspective.

We often think of our 'potential' as referring to the capacities we have in worldly life – how much we can achieve, how much we can improve, and what we have not explored about ourselves. But there is another aspect of potential. Spiritual science tells us that potentiality lies at the base of consciousness; that consciousness is just like a toy for children to play with. Through the spiritual journey we expand into the realm where consciousness assumes its true form. We are searching for the equivalent of the mother tincture from which medicines are prepared; we are searching for the potentiality from which consciousness is prepared.



What does it mean to utilize the potentiality from which consciousness is prepared? The realm of potentiality is the cosmic realm, where everything is possible before it manifests in the world. So those liberated souls who can journey in the cosmic region are able to utilize both consciousness and potentiality any way they like. Their human potential has moved into multiple dimensions and more of the spectrum of consciousness has opened up. Everything becomes potentized. Imagine how much more alive this state of existence is!

Author of *The Untethered Soul – The Journey Beyond Yourself*, **MICHAEL A. SINGER**, shares his thoughts on the nature of the world, the mind and the heart. In part 1, he also describes how we let impressions from the past and our thoughts affect our worldview and our potential.

# How to know THE NATURE *of your Being*

*You have to be able to get behind the mind  
enough to see what is not mind; then you'll be  
able to see what is mind.*

When all is said and done, there are only four things that you need to know about: the world, the mind, the heart, and you, the one who is experiencing the other three. If you know the nature of these four things, you will know all there is to know. The question becomes, at what level of detail do we need to explore each of them in order to know their nature?

Let's start with the world. What is the nature of the world around us? That seems like an enormous topic, but at the broadest level, it's actually pretty simple: The world's nature is the existence of form. A field of energy has manifested into myriad forms in accordance with underlying laws. That's about it. In order to know the nature of the world we don't need to know the behavior of every fish that lives in the water and every animal that lives on land. We simply need to recognize that there is water and there is land, and there are animals that live in the water and animals that live on the land. That knowledge is sufficient for one who is exploring the nature of things. The world is something that exists that you are capable of experiencing. It was here before you came, and it will be here after you leave. You don't need to analyze it. Just open your eyes, and you will see the myriad forms that creation brought into existence.

The important thing to realize is that the world has nothing to do with you. It exists independent of you. This is easy to see with distant planets like Jupiter and Mars. They are just a couple of planets orbiting one star, our Sun. The fact that you can look at them with a telescope doesn't mean they have anything to do with you. You won't even be here in a few years, but the planets and their star will go on existing for billions of years. What is more, there are billions of stars, and they all exist independent of you. Even the planet Earth exists independent of you. It is just one of the planets circling one of the stars in the universe. It has been doing this for five billion years, and it does not depend upon you for its existence.

So at the highest level, this is the nature of the world around you. Its nature is existence, its nature is form, and its nature is that it has nothing to do with you. You are just the experiencer of the existence

*In deep meditation  
there is absolute  
peace, quiet,  
serenity, and  
total calm all  
around you. But  
if you gaze in the  
direction of the  
personal mind,  
there is noise.*

of creation. But how much of creation are you actually experiencing? There is hardly a number small enough to represent how little you experience compared to how much you miss. Just stop for a moment and look at how little is within your field of vision. You can't even see what's behind you or what's going on next door. How much are you missing of everything that is going on in the universe right now? The fact is, you see practically nothing. One grain of sand compared to all the sand on all the beaches of the world is a larger percentage than what you can see going on in this universe at any given moment. So why do you think it has anything to do with you? You have to wake up and look at the world with a universal perspective.

Once you step back far enough, the nature of the world becomes clear. This is also true about the nature of mind.

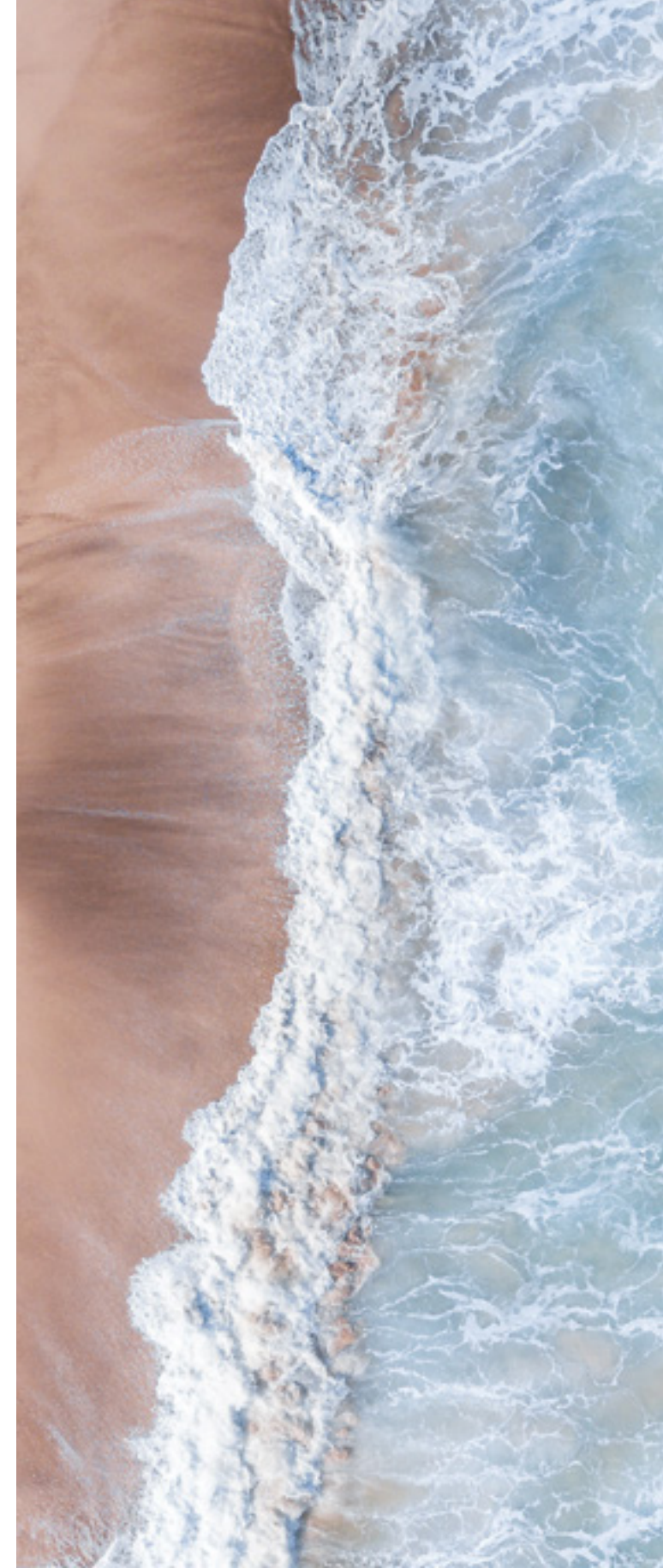
What is the nature of mind? The truth is, it is easier to understand the nature of the entire universe than to grasp the nature of mind. But this is not because the nature of mind is so complicated; it is because you can't see the forest for the trees. You can't see the mind because you are lost in your thoughts. You are so involved in your thoughts that you can't step back far enough to see what is creating them. You have to be able to get behind the mind enough to see what is not mind; then you'll be able to see what is mind.

Meditation gives you this perspective. In deep meditation you see the mind from a distance, like you see a star in the sky. But if you got up really close to a burning star, you would not recognize it as one of those things that dot the sky at night – you'd see it as a giant ball of burning fire. In order to see 'star', you must be able to see 'not star'. The

same is true with the mind. If you step back deep enough within your Self, you will see the mind talking at a distance – yackety yak. But around the edges it's not doing this, and beyond the edges there is perfect stillness. In other words, in deep meditation there is absolute peace, quiet, serenity, and total calm all around you. But if you gaze in the direction of the personal mind, there is noise. You are now able to see the thought-generating mind because you can see the still mind.

We don't maintain this perspective for long, however. We quickly get lost in the thoughts of the mind. That is why we can't see the nature of mind. In the purest sense, the mind's nature is a field of unmanifest energy that has the ability to manifest in the form of thoughts. You should see mind as an ocean of energy in which thoughts form like waves. Just as waves in the ocean come up and go back down, so thoughts in the mind come and go. Each thought is different, just as each wave is different, but they are all manifestations of the same ocean.

The mind is a field of energy that exists between you (the indwelling Being) and the world that you see. In this field of energy that is mind, there are laws that cause the wavelets of thoughts to manifest as they do. Just as scientists can study waves and understand why they behave as they do, so you can study your thoughts. You'll see that there are underlying laws that determine how the mind creates thoughts. If I knew every single thing that ever happened to you during your entire existence, I would know all the data that programmed your mind. If I put them all together in the right balance, I could predict what your thoughts would be when you see something in this world. There are patterns or impressions that the mind has learned, and this underlying



*The mind reacts based upon the impressions  
with which it is programmed, and the  
ripples caused by that reaction are what you  
experience as thoughts.*

a single thought that is not the result of your learned experiences.

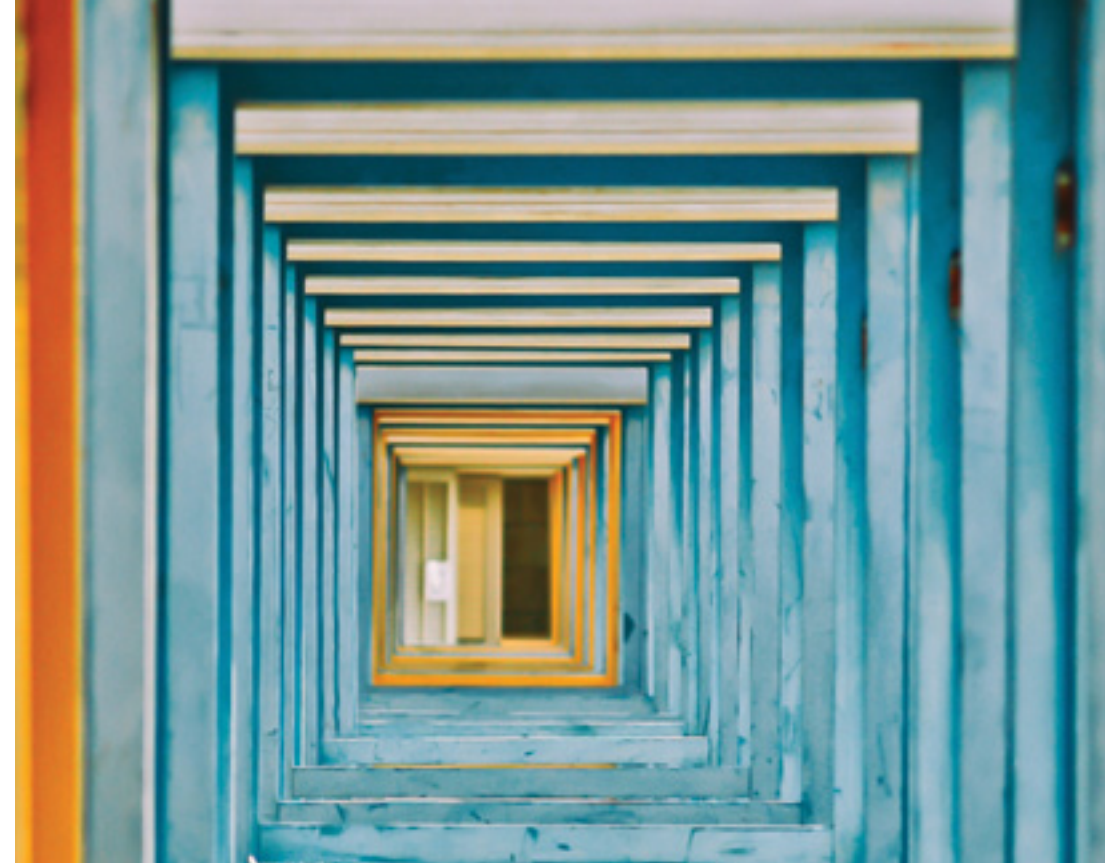
The sum of all these impressions determines what you think. Then you actually say outside what your thoughts are saying inside. Your mind literally tells you what to say, and you say it. That's scary stuff, isn't it? People don't talk about this, and almost nobody explains it. There was not a single class you ever took in school, no matter how far you went in your education, that told you what was going on in your mind. Instead of teaching you about the nature of the mind, they are busy programming your mind. How are you supposed to get free?

The mind reacts based upon the impressions with which it is programmed, and the ripples caused by that reaction are what you experience as thoughts. You think you are making your own decisions, but you are not. For example, you look at somebody and suddenly your mind says, "I don't like him." That could have happened because the shirt he's wearing was somehow associated with a bad childhood experience. Your likes, dislikes, and views about everything are affected by the impressions that got made upon your mind. So how can you call them your choices? You are just following the programming of your mind.

But there is something even more powerful than the mind that affects how you interact with the world – and that is your heart. Your heart is quite distinct from the field of energy that creates thoughts. Like everything else in creation, the heart has its own nature. The heart is best seen as an energy field with currents of different strengths flowing in various directions. These currents are like vectors of energy that can flow towards something or away from it, and they can certainly cause quite a disturbance when their flow is blocked. You experience these vector flows on a regular basis. If you see something in the world and the heart gets attracted to it, a vector of energy is formed in the heart and starts going in that direction. The next thing you know, you are drawn there. Your mind may be saying, "No, I don't want to do this; it could cause real problems." But the pull of the heart can be very strong in spite of what the mind is saying. This shows how distinct the heart is from the mind.

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To be continued



learning causes your thoughts to manifest in a particular way.

Your mind is the sum of your learned experiences. All the different experiences that have come in through your senses have left impressions upon the field of energy that exists as mind. Based upon these impressions, the mind generates different thoughts at different times. This is where thoughts come from. When the world of sense flows into your mind, thoughts will be created in accordance with these stored patterns. Once you see this, you'll realize that it's been happening your entire life. Wherever the spotlight of your senses happened to be aiming, your mind was being programmed. There was no planning involved; your mind was simply programmed by the events that happened to be unfolding in the direction you happened to be looking. If one or more of those events had not taken place, or if you had been looking in a different direction, your mind would be programmed differently, and your thought patterns would be different. If you understand nothing else, please take the time to understand this.

Every single second you are experiencing such a minute amount of the world, yet these events are being stitched together in your mind and presented back to you as absolute truth. But they are not the truth, and understanding this dynamic of how the world programs your mind is essential for knowing the truth. There is nothing holy about any of your thoughts, and they really have nothing to do with you. They are just the result of the impressions that got made upon your mind. Just as you can watch the waves of an ocean come and go, so you can watch the thoughts in the mind come and go.

But that is not what you do. You actually believe in them. A thought pops up, and it becomes your whole world. You make every single decision based upon your thoughts. You practically worship your thoughts. In fact, you do more than worship your thoughts – you think you are your thoughts. If right now your thoughts suddenly start saying, "I don't like this article. I don't even agree with what it's saying" – what is that? It is just thoughts forming in the essence of mind. There is not



# THOUGHT in action

The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match  
the beat of the universe, to match your nature  
with Nature.

Joseph Campbell

# SAFETY & transformation

ROSALIND PEARMAN presents the results of her qualitative research on the transformative benefits of creating a safe haven for transformation to occur.

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It can be deeply challenging to open our hearts to the needs of the many human beings who feel that home is a dangerous place, who desperately seek a safe haven. A few years back, I had the chance to discover from a group of teenagers just how transformative a safe haven can be. This happened in a creative arts summer camp in a space held by two spiritual organizations – the Quakers and the Heartfulness Institute at the Heartfulness retreat centre in Vråds Sande, Denmark. I carried out some research with some of the young people to find out why these events were so powerful in their lives, and I found that the most important and transformative element for them in the experience was the sense of being

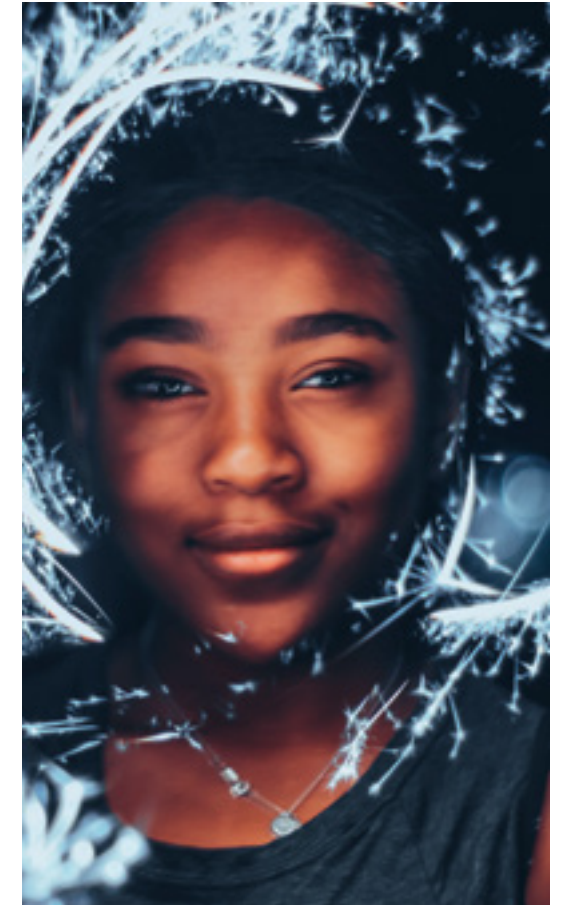
in a safe haven, feeling really safe, and feeling welcomed as they crossed the threshold. They did not feel judged. They were really able to be themselves. Sadly, this was a rare experience for them amidst increasing pressures from popular culture, peers, parents and schools.

There was a similar discovery in my doctoral research study, which was based on a comparison of reported changes between Heartfulness meditators and psychotherapy trainees. I was surprised to find one very key difference between the groups: when people started meditating, their relationships with all those around them improved, they became more connected and open. This was also confirmed

The sense of safety is transformative and extraordinarily generative in how we connect with others and the world. When we feel safe, we open our hearts easily like a flower in the sunshine.

anecdotally by people who were close to them. My hunch was that this increased harmony was due to increased sensitivity, as a result of the Raja Yoga approach to meditation, so they were more attuned to others. But in my study, that difference did not show up significantly between the two groups. Instead, the most significant differences were regarding positive mystical states. All the statements relating to strong feeling experiences – profound calm, profound safety, and an experience of infinity – were very significant in the group of meditators. And these feelings are linked to a loss of the fear of dying and anxiety.

The young people found a safe haven by being in a place of unconditional acceptance and welcome. The meditators found a safe haven by experiencing unconditional acceptance and welcome within their hearts. In both situations, the sense of safety is transformative and extraordinarily generative in how we connect with others and the world.



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When we feel safe, we open our hearts easily like a flower in the sunshine. While meditating on the source of light in the heart, we find this inner sunshine, this inner support, holding us carefully in the midst of the struggles, difficulties and uncertainties we face each day. Even when we lose contact with this feeling at a surface level, deep down we always know profound safety. The more we are anchored in this feeling, the more we pass it on to others, just by being with them. A safe haven is always there within our core and it can be shared with an infinite number.

# the heartful NEGOTIATOR

PART 2

## Sustainable outcomes through Heartful Negotiations

In the previous article, [RAVI VENKATESAN](#) looked at how prior disposition, ideas and thoughts in the head as well as emotions and feelings in the heart play a huge part in negotiation. In this article we'll dive deeper into what makes up prior disposition, and how to best manage it.

## Prior Disposition

Disposition is defined as the natural or prevailing aspect of one's mind as shown in behavior and in relationships with others; for example, a happy disposition, a selfish disposition, etc.

When we enter a negotiation, there will be emotional and intellectual reactions that we have to what happens as part of that interaction. However, even before that, we each carry a disposition into that space, which heavily influences how things

flow. Molding this disposition is a key first step to optimal negotiations. We will look at four specific aspects of disposition – Likes and Dislikes, Worries and Concerns, Desires, and Guilt.

## Likes and Dislikes

Think of a part of your heart reacting to everything that happens – from the physical space, to the chair you sit in, to the color of the walls around you, to the person in front of you, etc. Some of the reactions are strong enough to come to your conscious mind; others don't make it to the surface, but nevertheless impact how you feel. Remember, the same thing is happening for the person with whom you are negotiating.

The key here is to observe carefully what reactions your heart has to various things, as you enter a negotiation space, and consciously bring yourself to a 'neutral stance'. In other words dial down



any strong likes as well as strong dislikes that come up.

## To make this real, try the following exercise

Take a typical negotiation exercise that you go through on a regular basis. For example, if you are a manager, then take the interaction of providing assignments to a staff member, or if are an individual contributor, then take the interaction of discussing a new assignment with your boss. Think about things that feel pleasant or unpleasant about this interaction, and trace them back to your likes and dislikes. For example, each time you

receive a new assignment you may feel anxious, and this may be because you like more specifics and details and your boss likes to provide high-level direction and empower you.

Try to approach the same interaction by setting your disposition to a neutral stance. To do this, consciously recall and dial down your strong likes and dislikes. This will lead you to being more open-minded. See if the interaction felt any different. A lot of times our disposition, especially strong likes and dislikes, will create reactions that prevent the best outcomes. Practicing this exercise and making it part of muscle memory, will go a long way to addressing this.

In summary, prior to a negotiation, recall your strong likes and dislikes, reduce them consciously to bring yourself to a neutral and open-minded state of mind. See what shifts come out of this.

## Worries and Concerns

We all carry a bundle of worries and concerns with us all the time. These are mostly career or job related and family related, but can be from other sources as well. When we enter negotiations, these concerns weigh on us, and many times prevent us from reaching optimal outcomes. We cannot wish these concerns away; however, we can use a powerful Heartfulness meditation technique to alter our disposition prior to a negotiation. When our worries and concerns are aggravated during a negotiation, it often feels like the person we are negotiating with is an adversary. So if we start with a feeling that they are like a family member, like a brother or a sister, then we will approach the conversation with more ease, and reach a better understanding. To develop a general feeling of this kind in our disposition, we can simply close our eyes and meditate with our attention on our heart, for five to ten minutes every night, thinking that everyone is our brother or sister. Try this for a week before your next high stakes negotiation, and notice the difference in your disposition, in how you look at your colleagues, and the outcomes.

## Desires

All of us have desires and aspirations. Many times, they tend to cloud our judgement, especially when we enter the negotiation table. They keep us focused on our interest and the other person's position versus reaching a place of common understanding.

The simple task of writing down the top two or three things that we desire, resolving to be mindful of these during the negotiation process, will prevent them from unexpectedly influencing the negotiation.

## Guilt

The worst burden we carry is guilt. It comes from both wrong action and inaction – not acting where we should have. Guilt creates a heaviness that can put a major cloud over any negotiation process, completely blocking open discussion and creative generation of outcomes. There are no simple and easy answers to deal with guilt, especially if it exists at a subconscious level. Here is the Heartfulness practice that helps tremendously:

Spend a few minutes each night before sleep, go into your heart, review the day, repent for any mistakes that might have been committed, even unknowingly, and genuinely resolve not to repeat these.

This clears the burden from our hearts and leaves us feeling lighter. Try this for a week and see if your disposition changes.

In summary, practice the two Heartfulness methods suggested, along with dialing down strong likes and dislikes, and writing down your top two or three desires prior to your next negotiation. See how that shifts your prior disposition.

In further articles we'll explore what happens during the actual negotiation, and how to manage feelings and emotions in the heart as well as the ideas and thoughts in the mind to achieve the best outcomes.

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How Far  
Can You

**Fly?**

**MADHUSUDAN REDDY**

shares some thoughts on utilizing  
time and achieving success.

If there is anything valuable in creation it is time. Life is something that is embedded in every day, every hour, every minute and every second, so how can we systematically utilize time to be successful?

Let's first try to observe how we start the day. How often do we wake up with the feeling, "This is a beautiful world, and I am going to welcome another wonderful day"? The way we start the day colors how we will spend the rest of the day. The

*"Until you stretch your  
wings, you'll have no idea  
how far you can fly."  
There is tremendous power  
in our wings.*

first 30 minutes of our time are golden moments, valuable moments, affecting the quality of the rest of our day. So if we can spend those moments with self-discipline and wisdom, perhaps we will also utilize the rest of our time in a proper way.

Try to wake up with enthusiasm, with a smile on your face. Stay like that for a few minutes. Now, very gently, open your eyes. Try to see the beautiful world that is in front of you. For the remaining 20 minutes read an inspiring book, meditate or practice Yoga.

Exercise for at least 20 minutes every day, as part of your daily routine. Not much time is needed for Yoga and meditation. Spending just 30 minutes a day will develop a deep level of concentration that will save you hours of study and increase your ability to read. Then, before going to bed at night, spend five minutes with your eyes closed reflecting on how things went during the day. If you have hurt someone, it is a good time to let go by feeling sorry for it. Those minutes before sleep are a wonderful time to analyze the day and try to find better ways to be.

We have 24 hours at our disposal. One of the marks of a successful person is how effectively they utilize time. Just as the waves in the ocean never subside, so also there is no end to the ups and downs in life. When we want to swim, we swim across an ocean full of waves. When we want to achieve something in life, we continue

to move in the direction of our goals while facing the ever-present challenges.

Time is not like a well where the water continuously oozes. Whether we utilize it or not, it continues on. Try to utilize the time at least for today. Plan the programs you want to do for the day in advance; thus you will be moving closer and closer to your cherished goals. I do not know if we gain anything by wasting time, but we do lose one thing: our incarnation as a human being.

It is impossible to get two things back, once they are lost: one is life and the other is time. The first is not in our hands, as nobody knows when life will leave the body, but the second thing is very much in our hands.

A teacher once sent two of his students to cut wood in a forest. One of them took an axe, went early in the morning and started cutting a particular tree. Even after sunset he was still cutting the same tree. The second student spent the first couple of hours sharpening his axe and then went to cut the tree. He returned in the least possible time with the work completed as planned.

How to sharpen the axe we call the mind? Some students lament: "I studied for so many hours, but I could not succeed," whereas others read less and think more, plan systematically and achieve their goals. Student life is such a great time to construct the future! A time to reflect on good thoughts, to learn to ignore unnecessary and unwanted thoughts, to read books, to solve puzzles, to play games, and to share others' difficulties, helping them to the extent possible. Keep finding easier and skilled ways to do your daily chores. By this you will be very happy and save a lot of time.

Most of us travel distances by bus and train. We look out the window, we sleep or we gossip with others. Compare this to the lawyer Michael Gilbert who wrote a book while traveling in a train every day. But we also need to take breaks. When you are studying, relax and close your eyes after every hour, and try to absorb what you have studied so far. Also, try to discover the right time for your study. Is it from 5 to 11 a.m., for example? Study according to your plan. If you do not like your present system, then simply change it.

To achieve success, question yourself: in what work am I busy? Am I utilizing time properly or not? Powerful questions lead to powerful answers. Only such answers help us understand the real meaning of life. The way a cut tree re-sprouts again, the way the moon loses its glory at the new moon every month and then gradually regains it during the full-moon, the wise also excel in their life despite setbacks.

Here is another exercise that will help to build mental capacity: take any topic of interest to you and spend time thinking about it. Is your mind attentive on the subject for more than five minutes? Don't be discouraged if it is not. Practice for a week. Your attentiveness will increase by a few



minutes each day and you can go on gradually increasing the time.

To overcome procrastination there is only one strategy: what you have to do today, do today. This strategy also protects us from things that hinder our development. It reduces the tendency to postpone good things.

We expect results for everything we do. It is inevitable that every action has its own result, but it may not be as we expect. Be happy that the glass is half-full instead of discouraged that

it is half-empty. Successful people visualize their dreams and make efforts accordingly. When opportunity knocks on our door, will we respond? Napoleon Bonaparte said, "Until you stretch your wings, you'll have no idea how far you can fly." There is tremendous power in our wings. If we gently get on with our work, the result will be there in some way. Avoid haste and be cool. Serving the people around us, keeping them happy, and being happy ourselves develops inner strength, and that will save a lot of time. Our hearts will roar like lions.

*Life is something  
that is embedded  
in every day, every  
hour, every minute  
and every second,  
so how can we  
systematically  
utilize time  
to be successful?*



It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know of wonder and humility.

Rachel Carson

# AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

An interview with **PIERRE RABHI** on a life of purpose, of traditions and modernism, agro-ecology and Socrates, and transcendent love.



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# Transcendent Love

Part 1

Q You spent your childhood in an oasis in Algeria, but then had to face the modern world quite early in your life. How did such opposing cultural experiences mold the man you are today?

It was not easy for me. I was born and raised in a Muslim environment, in an oasis in the South of Algeria. When I was 4 years old, I lost my mother and that was a defining moment in my life. Soon after that, coal was discovered in our region and so the French came to operate the mine, as Algeria was still one of their colonies then. Coal mining caused a deep change in our lives, in our culture, in our traditions and in our biotope. It upset everything. Our little oasis, which had been so

quiet for so long, was suddenly in a sort of turmoil fraught with extremely rapid changes.

Many of our people became miners and were exploited, and that is when my father started to worry about our future. He thought that the rules of the game were no longer in our hands, so he entrusted me to a childless French couple, and they took care of me and introduced me to a new culture. That is how I lived alternatively in the modern world and tradition, Christianity and Islam, in a constant duality. I was confronted with totally incompatible beliefs, especially as far as religion was concerned. The credo of Islam states that God did not have a child, whereas the Christians claim that Jesus was the Son of God. So I found myself stuck between a rock and a hard place, as it were, and it was not very comfortable. That is how my humble life started.

When I was a teenager, my questions became more pressing. No answer was ever obvious, however, as I was aware of the impossibility of both religions agreeing. Then I thought that philosophers might be able to give me another answer, so I read a lot. I was not really brilliant at school, where I felt bored, and having read so many philosophical works I gave the last word to Socrates, who said, "All I know is that I know nothing." That is how it was, and that is how it still is.

**Q** A few years later you went to France. Can you explain what pushed you to settle down in a secluded area of the Cevennes, a choice that was going to change the rest of your life?

First I landed in Paris, at the heart of the hectic circle of self-satisfied modernism, where people

claimed they had found the answer to humankind's quest for happiness.

I had to earn a living, so I became a skilled worker in a company, where I had a new opportunity to observe the human condition. That experience helped me question the Parisian belief at the time of what defined happiness. Little by little I understood what human bondage meant: bartering one's existence for a salary, even if it meant risking one's life. It was not about how to live but how to exist. Then I kept thinking about the wealth nature offered; such beautiful things that no one could ever possibly appreciate, because life meant eleven months spent in a coma and one month to resuscitate every year, and nothing more.

Then I met a girl whose aspirations were similar to mine. We asked ourselves, "Could we really spend a whole life being stuck behind closed doors within a city? Why shouldn't we go towards nature, towards large spaces and the infinite world with its vast skies and areas?" So, we decided to go back to the land and settle as small farmers.

**Q** How did you do it? How did you manage to live in the country, far away from everything?

We did not have the skills or training for it. Returning to the land was for us a new initiation. How to become farmers? First I went to agricultural college and graduated, and then I worked on a farm in order to learn the real practical skills and what it really meant. For me, it was a first awakening. I immediately understood that what we call modern agriculture is about becoming a murderer of nature and of the soil, due to the constant use of toxic chemicals. They were used



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for everything – sprayed on the ground, on the vegetation, in the environment etc. Agriculture had become a destructive practice.

That was how I came to see it, all the more so because the doctor who introduced me to the country worked in public healthcare and could testify to the damage that had resulted from such extensive use of pesticides. So I was in good hands, at the heart of a very practical training that was not limited to theoretical principles. Then I said to myself that if I could not do without such destructive practices, I'd better do something else than tilling the land.

My friend the physician led me to discover Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic principles. I read the books of Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, one of Steiner's colleagues, who explained that biodynamic methods in accordance

*"All I know is that I know nothing." That is how it was, and that is how it still is.*

with nature would even have a positive impact on the soil. So I practiced biodynamic farming to begin with, then I devoted myself to organic agriculture, and now I specialize in agro-ecology. On our farm we experimented with non-toxic farming, in both agriculture and breeding, and everything went well.

From that period onwards I became a sort of spokesperson, an advocate of natural, ecological and organic agriculture. I wanted to share my

*I had been trying to understand myself through the environment and through other people, whereas I needed to understand my inner self.*



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experience so I wrote a book entitled, *From the Sahara to the Cevennes*. It was published and I received an award from the Cevennes Academy. In the book, I exposed only facts and gave no lectures; I just wanted to talk about the course of my life and show what changes I went through, changes that in fact revealed the general trend of modern life would take. I wrote more books and as they were successful I went on writing. At the same time, I became more engaged.

Having managed to survive and produce food within our own space, I wanted to see if agriculture that complied with the laws of life could work for the poorest farmers. So I went to Africa and we created our first agro-ecological center in Burkina Faso. I had a foot in the door, and I wanted to

go much farther, so I did. My observations went hand in hand with philosophical reflections about society, with a spiritual quest and with a practical approach. Thus were born the three poles upon which I wanted to act and bear witness.

*Q So you left for Burkina Faso in the 1980s to share the principles and techniques of agro-biology and to*

*experiment with your discoveries in another part of the world.*

I found myself in a very particular context, in the Sahel, where the people were mostly farmers. They had been living off the land for ages, even though they had not always done so wisely. For example, at one point they had started deforestation, but they had survived. Then, since they represented an important workforce, the farmers were mobilized to grow export goods and bring foreign money into the country. They had to use fertilizers and pesticides, which they were obliged to buy. As in many other places, they could no longer produce food to feed themselves and had to buy food for their families with what they managed to earn. As a result, they were deep in debt and the system led to a complete degradation of their living conditions. Actually, I blame these things for having contributed to the great Sahel famines.

So, we opened an agro-ecological center, which gave birth to a group who disseminated our agricultural methods all around the country and in other parts of Africa. Today, many people in Burkina Faso are involved in eco-agriculture. Clearly, even when the land is poor, it can still feed us sufficiently and qualitatively, provided we respect it.

*Q You have inspired so many people through your commitment, through the lectures you have given and the books you have written! Who are your own thought leaders, the people who inspire you?*

I have read quite a lot, as I mentioned already. I had my Catholic phase, then a Muslim one, and progressively a spiritual one, devoid of any

church or religion. That is the one I am still in. All through the course of my life, the person who has inspired me most is Socrates. When he said that he knew nothing, he spoke the truth. I don't think anybody would disagree with that. What do we really know? Very little, I am afraid.

Then I went through a very complex phase in my life: I did not feel clear about things and felt miserable, even though we had just succeeded in our back-to-the-land operation, and even though our children were feeling well. We had all the so-called trappings of happiness. In such moments, one can feel and live a strange intimate experience, which may be related to our past or whatever. Anyway, I was not well at all, and I was looking for a way out.

Then I discovered Krishnamurti and things began to change. He would not teach lessons, or teach how to think. He had that Socratic approach that made me realize that I had been trying to understand myself through the environment and through other people, whereas I needed to understand my inner self. Such an approach had a salutary effect on me because I could not resort to any religion or philosophy of any sort. Through Krishnamurti, I was confined to that sort of solitude that triggered in me, beyond mere thinking, a way to analyze myself, to understand myself and to find out all by myself. Then, I only needed a kind hand. So I went back to the Socratic approach and I said to myself: "Rely on nobody but yourself."

So I entered a mode of investigation related to direct feeling and thinking, to experience. Then I understood that I need not rely on anyone else's thought, and that I'd rather take into account the clear thinking I was endowed with, a thinking that was not within me but that had been and

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*I'd rather take into account the clear thinking  
I was endowed with, a thinking that was not within me  
but that had been and would be given to me,  
as long as I stopped looking for solutions.*

would be given to me, as long as I stopped looking for solutions. I just had to listen to myself, pay attention to the way I was evolving, the way I reacted, and the reasons why I was jealous, why this, and why that. It was an initiation of my self by my self. That really helped me fare better, in a very strong and powerful manner. I recovered all the energy I needed to pursue my journey on earth and on the land in the way it had been envisioned.

**Q** So since you discovered Krishnamurti, have you resorted to that inner voice in order to be guided in whatever you do, in all your choices?

Absolutely. I make sure I am following the right path. We are all on the right path, but we have to make sure of it. For that, we can ask ourselves: "Will it harm others if I do that? Is it merely conforming? Am I being influenced by preconceived ideas? Am I attached to dogma, to anything?" Once you have no attachment to anything, then you are really connected; you are not attached but connected, open to the Absolute. Regarding the Absolute, it makes me think of the quote of Meister Eckhart:

"Stop talking about God. All you will say about Him is nothing but lies."

**Q** And what happens when you are no longer attached to anything?

The last question to ask yourself then is whether your imagination was at work, trying to reassure and comfort you, or whether it was silence that let you know, a silence that can say so much more than any word you hear! It is a silence in which, at long last, something can be expressed, something that does not come from torments, or from a quest for Truth that was far too intense. Being silent does not mean you have to be lost in the desert. In the desert, there is a particular silence, the absence of noise, that silence that makes you say that you are no longer within your self. You are lost in the very center of the desert. Maybe. But that is not the silence I mean. I am talking about the silence you can hear when you are in the middle of a crowd. There is no need to be in an empty environment to hear that silence. And it is a very 'active' silence, which doesn't come just by magic, because it requires you to be present.

**Q** Being connected to that inner silence is important indeed. But how can we do that?

Well, do you expect someone will give you a recipe just to be applied? Today's recipes are more like relaxation than like silence. When you are very relaxed, you may think you are bathing in silence, but true silence is different. Its nature is transcendent. You have to open yourself to it. It is like the air you breathe. The air is there, and you breathe it. It is like love – the love you experience and the love you live. In all these deeds you are by yourself, completely alone, isolated, but without actually being so. When you want to be isolated you are really connected; on the contrary, the more you want to be connected the more isolated you feel. This silence is of a very peculiar nature. Speaking about it is no easy matter.

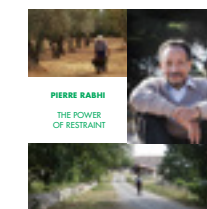
**Q** You have just evoked love. You often talk about the strong energy there is in love, which is like an engine that will help you change and change things around you.

That's right, but the word 'love' strikes a particular chord, which is open to different interpretations and fantasies. Love is, in fact, transcendent by essence. I think human beings are tailor-made for it. Love means loving trees, loving the earth, the fish, loving, loving and loving again; it's all about love.

Then there is also particular love, more intense, like the one you feel for your companion, for your children, for your dearest ones, the love between a man and a woman, the sort that 'I' will see and live as a great celebration! But love is not only that. When you love a tree, it is not personalized. It is like an essence, a transcendent reality to which you connect yourself. That is the reason why unconditional love can never ignite dissent. It is not its role; it is not in its essence.

I think that love is rich with multiple tones and intensities. There is a first circle, the circle of the human love we feel for our loved ones. Then, there is a second circle, and a third one... until we reach the love that embraces everything and everyone.

Interview by Sylvie Berti Rossi  
To be continued



A book of Pierre Rabhi  
**The Power of Restraint,**  
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it *changes* everything

Until you make the  
unconscious conscious,  
it will direct your life  
and you will call it fate.

*Carl Jung*



# personal peace

CAROL TALLON speaks of epic journeys, spiritual awakenings, the dark night of the soul and the healing power of love.

People talk of epic journeys starting with a single step, but I'm not too sure about this. The more I think about it, the more convinced I am that the most epic of journeys is rarely planned. Rather, it evolves over weeks, months, years and decades. Perhaps even over the course of a lifetime. Apple founder Steve Jobs said it best when he described life as a 'join the dots' exercise. The journey and the course that it takes is obvious in retrospect, but when you are standing amidst the dotty chaos that is life, you must trust that as you jump, skip or struggle from dot to dot, they will indeed connect in a meaningful way at the end. It all comes down to trust.

But trust is a funny concept. We trust organizations more than the people within them; think banks and bankers. We trust brands more than the products that carry their mark; think Coca Cola and Coke. We trust advisers

and counselors we appoint more than ourselves. Why do you think that is?

Trust in a higher power – God, Spirit, the Universe – is inevitably given too easily or not at all. This is probably true for the trust and faith we place in ourselves. We place it too easily or not at all. What would it be like to be able to fully trust ourselves, the world around us and our place within it? No self doubts or imposter syndrome. What would that even look like?

I have no insight greater than yours, but I believe that it would look like peace; personal peace. And if such trust caught on in this viral age, how far could this personal peace expand? To our families perhaps, to our communities, throughout our country or maybe even globally. Is this too simplistic? Perhaps, perhaps not. But I am reminded of the icon who is Malala, and I am reminded of the power of one.

Power. How comfortable are you reading that word? Power. What does it mean to you? What does the word trigger in your mind – corruption, wealth, evil or good? I have learnt to accept power as that internal spark that ignites from my spirit whenever I take the action I am guided to take. When this power kicks in, I can feel it as a palpable, chest-expanding explosion that makes my entire body tingle until my fingers feel like they are shaking. The physical feeling and energy is so strong that I feel sparks coming from my fingertips, like I could start a fire by touch alone.

Twice in my adult life I forgot my own power. I now understand and accept that it is easily done. I believe that we are all born shining, but the challenges of life wear us down and make us forget our innate, personal power. Life can dull our light, and when that happens it can be difficult to see clearly. We need the light. The world needs my light and it needs yours. Part of our role in this lifetime must surely be to nurture our inner light and to keep that internal spark from going out altogether.

The first time it happened, my life went into a state of triage with lots of people interfering, trying to help. Talking about me, never to me. Problems that were not urgent were ignored; urgent problems were attended to but nothing was healed. How could it have been? Frustratingly, nothing was learned. This crisis brought my life crashing down around me, but I resisted change and healing and help that was

offered. By struggling to hold firm to my broken life, I denied myself the opportunity of a new, simpler, better life. Gone was all that beautiful potential for learning lessons and releasing destruction patterns. I got back up and limped through another few years. It was almost a decade before the opportunity came around again.

The second time, like before, did not feel like an opportunity. It felt like my world collapsing again, only this time I did not have enough strength left to even try to cling on. I was tired, my soul felt achy with tiredness. I felt broken. There are so many ways to describe this time; it was more than a bad patch, this was rock bottom. I was living through my dark night of the soul.

For the first time, I knew that there was simply no fight left in me. And that was to be my saving grace. The value of rock bottom is that there is nowhere left to fall. Therefore, there was no mask to be maintained, no denial, no running away from reality. Nowhere is more real than rock bottom and that very certainty, at a time of swirling uncertainty, became my savior. Adversity can be a powerful launch pad. Gone is the pride that refuses help, gone is the fear of failing, gone is the ego-protecting, face-saving nonsense of which I was particularly adept. It was all gone. And in its place, most unexpectedly, I found a kind of peace. But it was peace by explosion. It reminded me that not every awakening is gentle. By surrendering to any help or consolation on offer, I experienced love. I understood the importance of compassion, for myself and for others. Through these months came clarity, and that changed everything.

We may know that forgiveness, compassion, empathy and love are the way to release negative thoughts and feelings of blame, guilt or victimhood that hold us back. But sometimes that doesn't come easily. It can be difficult to imagine or visualize sending waves of love to people when the feeling is not real. What I have learned on my journey so far is that it all begins with love.

With love, all healing can happen, as compassion is merely a by-product or symptom of that love. And with compassion, blame fades. Without blame, the need for forgiveness simply floats away. I wish I could pinpoint the moment I started to feel love on my journey. Within a day or two of it happening I had the strongest sensation of light-headedness, and explosive happiness, and peacefulness and something that I can only describe as chest-expanding. None of these were familiar feelings in the six months prior, so I knew that change was in the offing.

While I was surprised, I should not have been. This is what I had asked for, what I had sought and what I had meditated for. Why are we surprised when we get what we ask for? So while I learn, if I can teach anything, let it be love. Love first yourself, and everyone else, then everything else will follow.

[www.caroltallon.com](http://www.caroltallon.com)

*It reminded me that not every  
awakening is gentle.  
By surrendering to any help  
or consolation on offer,  
I experienced love.*



# The Sacred dance of Healing

An exclusive interview with DR CRYSTAL JONES.

Q It seems like your vocational path has led you to hold space to help people heal and rejuvenate in many different capacities. I find that alchemy really happens when humans connect with this intention. Can you share a little bit about the space that's created when two people come together to evoke healing?

I feel the space that's created when two people come together to evoke healing is like a sacred dance. A lot of the time there's the healer and the healing facilitator, but I really think it's two people on the same accord.

When a person is looking for another language of healing and more depth, and they cross the path of a healer, they are also responsible for understanding what they want from it, rather than only thinking, "This person is a doctor, or this person is a Yoga instructor and they've mastered this, so it will give me what I need." So as a healer I generally ask the question, "Who are you? What is it that my path can do to serve you?", because we can't be in a sacred dance until we both own the fact that our healing is within. Our power is really something that comes together to read each other and to move through different interferences and destructive cycles together.

*But now I also have the understanding that what we're looking for is never outside us; we're just unable to accept it and remember it at this moment.*

Q And building on that, how do you find yourself balancing your role as a guide while also allowing that person's inner guidance to come forward naturally?

I guide based on listening to them. So they actually lead. I consider myself as a guide in the same way as someone who speaks a different language would be a guide for someone else. I hear what people are saying – I listen to what they're saying, what their worries are, what they're saying with their non-verbal cues – and when it seems like they are getting stuck in a pattern, I translate it so they understand why their body is responding this way. What core values, what core experiences, what core truths are they going with? And so their guidance actually tells me what that is.

When I ask them who they are and what they want out of this experience, we have a clear path and I understand what their belief systems are. I understand that maybe they have a need to be needed, or maybe that they want to feel loved, but they don't have boundaries, they have walls up. When I understand that, I can see where the disconnect is and why they're not necessarily where they want to be. Just because they're saying what their core values are, and where they want to be, that's not the same as being there. Incongruence will never really produce results, and so my job is to be in there and help them create that level of congruency.

It's an evolutionary process, so it doesn't necessarily happen that same day. It could, but it is not supposed to happen at a certain time. It's a process of evolving a truth until it's a core belief, and when it's a core belief that's what can then be expected. But now I also have the understanding that what we're looking for is never outside us; we're just unable to accept it and remember it at this moment.



**Q** You were talking about your process of being a translator. I find so much of healing is a reconciliation of syntax. We tell ourselves one thing, and then we have to uncover that it's actually something else. Can you speak more about how people are able to translate a problem into something more empowering?

It might sound like a cliché, but a lot of it is the 'scarcity and abundance' mentality. A problem means that we feel we are lacking something, and that right there is enough to understand that we are not in the present moment. A person coming for healing is not in the present moment because they're lacking something. So they have to get to the point when they're not lacking anything and they understand that their experiences have led them to this point. Then, what they are doing is understanding that they are excellence and perfection personified. For that, they have got to go within, but it's not necessarily a problem.

Any time we see things as problems, we are discounting that we're made in the image of perfection. And so we continually fight ourselves and continue to be who we are not, rather than accepting fears and shadow truths and realizing that this is our wholeness. Where we are right now is our wholeness. If we want to create a new narrative we can, but there is nothing wrong with our existing narrative; it's just where we've been till now and the things we've accepted as true.

So let's figure out what's true and what's not. Say we don't want certain belief patterns to be true anymore, where are they coming from? Do we want to evolve those patterns, or do we want to stay safe right now and just be where we are?

**Q** We have this potential to evolve into that higher Self. What do you see as those major thresholds or milestones that we have to pass through to continue on this journey?

One of the major milestones is owning power and understanding that we are the co-creators of our lives. We get to make those decisions. Understanding that life is happening through us and for us, not to us. Situations are happening, but they are happening through us and for us.

I think that's the biggest limitation – thinking that we are always the victim. I don't mean that nobody's ever been a victim of anything, but that everybody tends to see or operate based on, "What happens to me?" The truth is we operate that way, however we can turn that story into what we want to turn it into. If we don't understand the power we have – to turn that story into what serves the highest good – then we'll continue to be in a problem, we'll continually think something's wrong with us, and we'll continually be acting backwards.

To be continued  
Interviewed by EMMA IVATURI

An abstract graphic consisting of numerous white lines of varying lengths and orientations radiating from the bottom left corner of the page. The lines are set against a solid light orange background. Some lines are horizontal, while others are diagonal or vertical, creating a sense of movement and energy.

be inspired.

It is love alone that  
gives worth to all things.

Teresa of Avila



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 as aspects of life.

# ASANA



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 that allows him 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](http://www.daaji.org).

Asana is the third of Patanjali's eight limbs of yogic practice. **DAAJI** explains the role of Asana in Yoga, how the physical steadiness of Asana helps us to create inner steadiness, and how the yogic science of Asana is also helping people worldwide to maintain health and well-being.

**T**his third limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga is probably the most popular and also the least well understood today. When we think of *Asanas*, many of us will visualize Hatha Yoga exercises at the local gym or yoga studio, but there is much more to understand about *Asanas* than this.

The word *Asana* comes from the Sanskrit root *as*, which means 'to sit': the original *Asana* was the sitting pose for meditation. The purpose of Yoga has always been union or oneness with the infinite, so the main focus in yogic practice is meditation, and through meditation union. It is in this context that Patanjali defined and described *Asana* in the following three Sutras:

**2.46: *Sthira sukham āsanam.***

*Sthira* means steady, stable; *sukham* means comfortable, relaxed; *asanam* means posture or sitting position. So that sitting position which is steady and comfortable is *Asana*.

**2.47: *Prayatna shaithilya ananta samapattibhyam.***

*Prayatna* means tension or effort; *shaithilya* means relaxing or loosening; *ananta* means infinite, endless; *samapattibhyam* means bringing the attention to and merging with. So *Asana* comes through relaxing efforts and allowing consciousness to merge with the infinite.

**2.48: *Tatah dṇḍwa anabhighata.***

*Tatah* means thus; *dṇḍwa* means the dualities or pairs of opposites, such as light and dark, right and wrong; *anabhighata* means without impact or freedom from suffering. So through *Asana* we become free from the impact of the dualities of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.

When we summarize what Patanjali said about *Asana*, it is this: find a steady and comfortable sitting posture, so that you can relax your efforts and allow your consciousness to merge with the infinite, and you will become free from the impact of the dualities of existence. This is the purpose of *Asana*.

Swami Vivekananda explained the role of *Asana* further: in order to meditate every day, find a posture in which you can remain for a long time. It should be an easy posture, and it need not be the same for everyone. What matters is that it should allow the flow of energies through the system.

In his book, *Raja Yoga*, Swamiji described how a good deal of activity goes on in the body when we meditate. “Nerve currents will have to be displaced and given a new channel. New sorts of vibrations will begin, and the whole constitution will be remodeled, as it were. But the main part of the activity will lie along the spinal column, so that the one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the three parts – the chest, neck and head – in a straight line. Let the whole weight of the body be supported by the ribs, and then you have an easy natural posture with the spine straight.”

This may be the first ever description of neuroplasticity arising out of meditation. Swamiji described the process of neuroplasticity not only in the brain, but in the central nervous system, and especially the spinal cord from the chest up to the head and brain, the regions encompassing the chakras of the Heart and Mind.

Swamiji also guided us on how to maintain this alignment of the spinal column and the brain: “Say to yourself that you are firmly seated, and that nothing can move you. Then mention the perfection of the body, bit by bit, from head to

foot. Think of it as being clear as crystal, and as a perfect vessel to sail over the sea of life.” The main thing is to leave the body free, holding the chest, shoulders and head straight, so that you do not feel the body at all. When you go beyond the physical, you will lose all sense of the body, pleasure and pain. Afterwards you will feel so rested. It is the most perfect rest you can give the body.

The best postures for meditation are thought to be the cross-legged postures, such as *Siddha-asana*, with both hands resting on the thighs, and *Padmasana*, the lotus position. Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur explained the philosophy behind the cross-legged position: if we are to return to our origin through meditation, contracting our existence into nothingness, then it is helpful to adopt a similar physical position of contraction or withdrawal.



Siddhasana

*The best postures for meditation are thought to be the cross-legged postures, such as Siddha-asana, with both hands resting on the thighs, and Padmasana, the lotus position.*

He said: “The contraction always starts from below and proceeds gradually upwards because of its upward tendency. Therefore, in order to go upwards he must start contracting from below. The form would only be to bring his legs and the allied parts to one pose and to keep them steady. In whatever way it might be done, the form would finally be that of *Asana*. It is essential because it paves our way to the Ultimate. The posture must always be the same. The reason is that in this way he gets associated with the great Power, the very thing he takes up in the beginning for the attainment of his particular objective. Thus the form which is associated with Reality helps him a good deal in his primary initiation.

“Performing meditation in an upright sitting pose has been thought to be most advantageous from very ancient times, because in that position the flow of divine grace descends straight upon the seeker.

If seeker sits crookedly or in an unsteady pose, the flow of effulgence will necessarily be impeded or disturbed. The seeker will thus be deprived of the full benefit of the descent. Therefore, in order to get the greatest spiritual benefit, one must sit in a proper steady pose.”

But this aligned sitting position is not just so that we receive the flow of divine grace. This steady comfortable pose is also important for physical well-being. Our heads are heavy – even when they are balanced lightly on top of our necks they weigh around 5 kilograms. Now, what happens when we become deeply absorbed in meditation with Transmission and we lose consciousness? Sometimes our head will fall so far forward that it lands on our chest, and in that position it can put up to 27 kilograms of strain on the neck and shoulders. Imagine what that does over time to the back, neck and central nervous system! So it is important to stay upright, steady and balanced in a relaxed way during meditation.

To keep the head balanced lightly on the neck and shoulders during meditation requires a strong consciousness. For that we need to meditate. So everything is interlinked – the physical, mental and spiritual. Even to sit in a comfortable, steady *Asana* during meditation, we have to sharpen our consciousness.

*When the ancient Rishis meditated to attain a state of oneness with God, they soon learnt that the body also needed to be cared for and exercised. Sitting in meditation all day would not allow them to stay healthy, so they developed other postures that could be done throughout the day while they remained meditative.*

When the ancient Rishis meditated to attain a state of oneness with God, they soon learnt that the body also needed to be cared for and exercised. Sitting in meditation all day would not allow them to stay healthy, so they developed other postures that could be done throughout the day while they remained meditative. That way they could continue to meditate while also improving immunity, respiration, blood circulation, muscle tone and joint flexibility. And so the physical practices of Hatha Yoga evolved.

But are they just physical exercises? The legendary Yogacharya, B.K.S. Iyengar once said, “You must do the *Asana* with your soul. How can you do an *Asana* with your soul? We can only do it with the organ of the body that is closest to the soul – the heart. So a virtuous *Asana* is done from the heart and not from the head. Then you are not just doing it, but you are in it. Many people try to think their way into an *Asana*, but you must instead feel your way into it through love and devotion.”

*Asanas* are effective when the heart, mind and body work in unison. Each movement is performed slowly with a heightened consciousness of what is happening. If *Asanas* are practiced with a meditative mind, there will be many advantages, not just physical ones.

*Asanas* maintain the flexibility of the spinal vertebrae, and this is important for healthy movement and is the key to the body’s overall plasticity. In yogic terminology, this leads to the free flow of energy along the spinal column. And what do we do with that free flowing energy? It is drawn inwards in *Pratyahara*, the fifth limb of Patanjali. *Asanas* also stretch and tone the fasciae, the connective tissue that is found throughout the body. The fasciae hold the muscles together in the correct place, separate them so they work independently of each other and provide a lubricated surface so that the muscles move smoothly.

As the field of Hatha Yoga continues to expand and develop, there are so many *Asanas* being taught today. Here are seven common ones, along with some of the health benefits they offer, just to give you a taste of how the yogic science of *Asanas* has evolved:



Veerabhadrasana

2. *Veerabhadrasana* is for the neck, shoulders and backaches. It also helps with chest expansion, asthma, and cancer (as oxygen levels go up). It improves confidence.



Tadasana

1. *Tadasana* is for general stretching and for blood circulation in the body. It also helps with knee pain, calcium deposits such as spurs, and cramps. It increases balance, both physical and mental. It is also good for Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.



Parsva Uthanasana

3. *Parsva Uthanasana* aids digestion and improves the flexibility of the back and of the hamstring muscles. It brings calm and a purpose.



Dvipada Pitham



Mahamudra



Jataraparivritti

4. *Dvipada Pitham* is for blood pressure management, both low BP and high BP (but with some variation). It also helps relieve headache, as well as toning the back, knees, shoulders and calf muscles. It supports balance and confidence.

5. *Jataraparivritti* works on the digestive system and cleanses the body of impurities.

6. *Mahamudra* opens the pelvic region, and is good for reproductive health. It supports concentration and calms the mind. Is excellent for pregnant women.



Suryanamaskar

7. *Suryanamaskar* helps to manage diabetes and thyroid problems. It brings confidence and activates the whole nervous system.

The most important thing to remember is that Ashtanga Yoga is a complete package. It was not designed for us to pick and choose any of the eight limbs at whim. To really benefit from *Asana*, the soul, heart and mind must be very much involved. You can start anywhere, but if you are serious in your wish to grow, the rest will eventually follow.

# Die to Yourself

THEOPHILE THE YOUNG continues his mentorship on the topic of death with his teacher, THEOPHILE THE ELDER.

In this conversation, they together explore the idea of 'dying to yourself' during meditation.

**THEO THE YOUNG:** Some people say that with meditation we die before dying, or we die to ourselves. Would you mind telling me what it means?

**THEOPHILE THE ELDER:** That's a vast subject! Let's start instead by doing an experiment if you don't mind.

Sit very comfortably,  
Plunge inside your heart,  
Let you be absorbed in the light,  
And get lost in it.

*Silence*

What can you see?

**Y:** The light loses its luminosity. It is a lightless light. I go on absorbing myself in the heart deeper and deeper. I can describe no more. Actually, I am drawn into a peaceful vacuum, where there are no reference points anymore. Everything is still. It is a no movement move.

**E:** Relax now, we shall speak together again after your meditation.

*One hour passes*

**E:** That's all.

*Theophile the Younger very gently ends his meditation, just as the Elder taught him. His consciousness emerges again in him. He lets it unfold in his inner space. He slowly comes up to the surface, step by step, gaining again his body, his feeling. Then he turns his attention outward and he notices the smiling old man facing him.*

**E:** How long do you think you have meditated?

**Y:** Such as usual in my meditative experiences, I have the feeling that it lasts a few minutes, but this time I lost all awareness. I came back before you said, “That’s all.”

**E:** Try to recollect the state of extreme depth. What do you remember?

**Y:** A minute amount of consciousness remained. I existed without existing. Actually, something remained, but the notion of ‘self’ was lost. I think perhaps this was the higher Self.

**E:** The meditation lasted one hour.

**Y:** One hour! It seemed so brief!

**E:** For one hour, you died to yourself, though you were alive. That is a high level of consciousness. Higher than this is *sabaj samadhi*, when your consciousness is inside the depth of the Self and at the same time fully present in life, with others.

**Y:** Does a link exist between this and NDEs (Near Death Experiences)?

**E:** There are similarities. We consciously experience *samadhi* in meditation, whereas people often have NDEs during a surgical operation, a cardiac arrest, where they have a flat line electroencephalogram: they are clinically dead, but retain consciousness. The experience is so strong that they remember it long after it happened. Very often, this radically changes their life.

**Y:** Would you mind explaining to me what happened during meditation?

**E:** With the meditation posture, body relaxation and Transmission, you left your body consciousness behind, then the consciousness of the Heart Region, and went to the realm of cosmic consciousness, the space of universal consciousness, of the universal mind, where we find inspiration, intuition, premonitory dreams and even revelation, either spiritual or scientific.

**Y:** Do you think that great discoveries are coming from this dimension?

**E:** Yes, did you ever notice that great discoveries are sometimes simultaneously made in all four corners of the world?

**Y:** Do you mean that we can willingly tune in to information from the cosmic level?

**E:** That is the way it happens, but a certain level of consciousness and knowledge is required. Just as in the canonical book of Chinese Medicine, the *Huangdi Nei Jing*, Emperor Wuang Ti knows how to ask the right questions to his teacher, Qi Pa. Knowledge protects itself from itself. It can be accessed only under certain conditions... but that is another story.

**Y:** As you have made me aware, is the purification and enlightenment of the five points of the heart necessary as a preparation? And maybe those of the following points as well?

*The old man silently approves.*

*With the meditation posture, body relaxation and Transmission, you left your body consciousness behind, then the consciousness of the Heart Region, and went to the realm of cosmic consciousness, the space of universal consciousness, of the universal mind, where we find inspiration, intuition, premonitory dreams and even revelation, either spiritual or scientific.*

# LOVE



MARGARET NOBLE was a Scottish-Irish social worker, author and teacher. She met Swami Vivekananda in London in 1895 and then traveled to Calcutta, India, in 1898. One of the reasons Swamiji had invited Margaret to India was to spread education to the women of the country, and true to her calling she opened a girls' school in Calcutta later the same year. Swamiji formally initiated her into the life of a Brahmacharya and gave her the name of SISTER NIVEDITA, meaning the dedicated one. She was also a close associate of the Holy Mother, Sarada Devi, the wife of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who embraced her as '*khooki*' meaning 'little girl' in Bengali. In her *Complete Works*, there are many stories of the Swamiji's life and teachings, which bring him alive to us, her readers. Here is one such story from their travels in Kashmir.

He spoke of the future. There was nothing to be desired, but the life of the wanderer, in silence and nudity, on the banks of the Ganges. He would have nothing. 'Swamiji' was dead and gone. Who was he, that he should feel responsible for teaching the world? It was all fuss and vanity. The Mother had no need of him, but only he of Her. Even work, when one had seen this, was nothing but illusion.

There was no way but love. If people sinned against us, we must love them till it was impossible for them to resist it. That was all. Yet, as I write the words, I know well that I can give no idea of the vastness of which all this was utterance, as if no blow, to any in the world, could pass and leave our Master's heart untouched; as if no pain, even to that of death, could elicit anything but love and blessing.

He told us the story of Vashishtha and Vishwamitra; of Vasihshta's hundred descendants slain; and the King left alone, landless and crownless, to live out his life. Then he pictured the hut standing in the moonlight, amongst the trees, and Vashishtha, and his wife within.

He is poring intently over some precious page, written by his great rival, when she draws near and hangs over him for a moment, saying, "Look, how bright is the moon tonight!"

And he, without looking up, says, "But ten thousand times brighter, my love, is the intellect of Vishwamitra!"

All forgotten! The deaths of his hundred children, his own wrongs, and his sufferings, and his heart lost in admiration of the genius of his foe! Such, said the Swami, should be our love also, like that of Vashishtha for Vishwamitra, without the slightest tinge of personal memory.

At this moment, a peasant brought sprays of pear blossom, and laid them down on the table at which we sat.

And one of us lifted them, saying, "Swami! These were made for worship, for they will bear no fruits!"

But he looked at her smiling, and she could not break the spell, to offer them.

And so he went. We all, servants and boat people, friends and disciples, parents and children, accompanied him to the tonga on the roadside, to say good-bye. One sturdy little figure, the four-year-old daughter of his chief boatman, whose devotion to him we had long noted, trotted determinedly at his side, with a tray of fruit for his journey on her black head, and stood, smiling farewell, as he drove away. And we, not less deeply touched than this little child, but infinitely less unselfish, in our grown-up complexity of thought and emotion, knew not when we should look upon his face again, yet failed not to realize that we had that day lived through hours, within whose radiance all our future would be passed.

Excerpt from *Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Volume 1, chapter 'The Master As I Saw Him'.



# *taste of* LIFE

Establishing the understanding that we all belong to one humanity is the most essential step for how we might continue to coexist on this sphere we call Earth. ... There are many borders to dismantle, but the most important are the ones within our own hearts and minds – these are the borders that are dividing humanity from itself.

*Ai WeiWei*

# The 5 Elements

FÉLICIE TOCZÉ

In Chinese medicine, the five elements are considered to be an expression of the natural cycle of the seasons. Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water correspond to spring, summer, the period between seasons (Indian summer), autumn and winter. They come to represent and shape each season, with their own characteristics.

The cycle of the 5 elements is also found in our daily life as morning, noon, afternoon, evening and night. It is interesting to note that there are natural cycles at many different levels. This is how the notion of seasonality is also reflected in the pattern of our day.

On waking in the morning, we find within us the spirit of Wood in the rising, fresh energy of spring. At noon, Fire, we are at the summer of our day, and our energy is extrovert and joyful. Then, a milder afternoon settles, with the need to return to the center, our Mother Earth, and it is here that we find our time for rest between seasons. As the light falls, the gray of Metal descends, and the energy becomes denser and slows down. Finally, at night, the Winter of our day restores us, so we regain strength for the next day, as Water, the element of the depths, offers us precious time to rejuvenate.

This cycle also describes various psychological and physical states, which can also be influenced and balanced through simple methods such as yoga exercises, work on the meridians and, of course, diet.

There are two sequences, or cycles of interaction among the 5 elements : the first is called the Generating (Sheng) Cycle and the second is called the Control (Ke) Cycle. Understanding these natural interactions makes it possible to use one element to act on another, either during an excess or during a deficit.

Here is how we can understand these cycles :

## GENERATING CYCLE

Wood feeds Fire, which nourishes the Earth with its ashes, which themselves 'dissolve' into the ground to give birth to Metal, whose mineral strength gives power to Water.

## CONTROL CYCLE

Wood knows how to maintain the Earth with its roots, Fire burns Wood, Earth contains Water, Metal cuts Wood as an axe, and finally Water extinguishes Fire.

What happens when we apply these two cycles to ourselves, by integrating the main characteristics of each element? By using the balancing power of diet to regulate these internal flows, we are able to use the principles to help manage our emotions and our energy.

By listening to the dynamics of the 5 elements in our body, we allow ourselves to be in harmony with nature, so that we adapt to the natural cycles and become stronger in the face of our environment.

Elements

## 5 ELEMENTS AND THEIR TRANSFORMATION STAGES

### YIN STAGE OF MAXIMUM EXPANSION

Wood

Represents a gaseous state directing energy towards heat, giving it a new expansive force.

Fire

Represents the maximum state of expansion, like plasma, where energy is very active and impalpable

Water

Represents the liquid state that begins to reawaken energy with gentle movement.

Earth

Represents the state of the ground where energy begins to focus and become matter

Metal

Represents a state of contraction where material solidifies and becomes compact.

### YANG STAGE OF MAXIMUM CONTRACTION

# 5 ELEMENTS

## FIRE – Summer

Taste: bitter

Meridians : heart, master of the heart, small intestine and triple warmer

Cooking styles: sauté, short boil, dry grilling

Food: leafy green vegetables, aqueous summer vegetables, bitter fruits

## WOOD – Spring

Tast : acid

Meridians: liver, gallbladder

Cooking styles: quick and high heat, tempura

Food: sprouted grains, young leaves and shoots, seeds, acidic fruits

## METAL – Autumn

Taste: sour, spicy

Meridians: lungs, large intestine

Cooking styles: pressure cook, bake

Food: root vegetables, grains

## WATER – Winter

Taste: salt

Meridians: kidneys, bladder

Cooking style: soups, long simmer

Food: salted condiments, sea vegetables, miso, legumes

## EARTH – Late Summer

Taste: sweet

Meridians: spleen-pancreas, stomach

Cooking styles: slow and steamed, with a little water or oil

Food: round soft vegetables, squash, sugary fruits

## CINNAMON AND MUSHROOM OATS WITH FOREST SAUCE

### **Mushroom oats**

1 cup of whole oat groats, soaked overnight and rinsed

1 cinnamon stick

A stamp-sized piece of kombu seaweed

A sprig of thyme

A pinch of sea salt

1 cup crimini mushrooms

Olive oil

Salt (smoked if possible)



Cook the oats and other ingredients in water, covering them one finger length above the surface. Bring to the boil and lower heat, cover and cook for about 45 minutes. Let stand so the grains continue to cook slowly.

Cut the mushroom into thin strips and gently sauté, preferably in a cast iron pan, with a drizzle of olive oil. Salt at the end of cooking. Mix into cooked oats.

### **Forest sauce**

2 shallots, finely chopped

Olive oil

1 cup of amber beer (the alcohol evaporates when cooked)

1 cup vegetable stock (or shitake dashi from shitake soaking water)

A sprig of thyme

3 ground juniper berries

1 cup table spoon mushroom powder

200 ml vegetable cream (coco/soja/rice based) to give creamy consistency

2 teaspoons blackcurrant jam (or other berry)

2 teaspoons brewers yeast

1 teaspoon vegetable salt

fresh ground pepper (be creative, e.g. wild

Voatsiperifery pepper or Penja white peppercorn

Brown the shallots in olive oil. Pour in the amber beer and vegetable stock. Add thyme leaves, ground juniper berries and reduce the stock for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain (this mixture is excellent with other dishes!). Return the stock to the stove on a low flame and add the mushroom powder, vegetable cream or stock, cooked oats, preserve, brewers yeast, salt and pepper.

Serve the carrots atop the mushroom oats, covered in the forest sauce. Pair with a winter salad with chopped parsley and a well-seasoned mustard vinaigrette with a hint of honey and gingerbread spices to enhance the Scandinavian touch.

## CARROTS WITH DRIED APRICOTS

A large bunch carrots, a rainbow of colors if possible!

5 dried apricots, diced

1 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

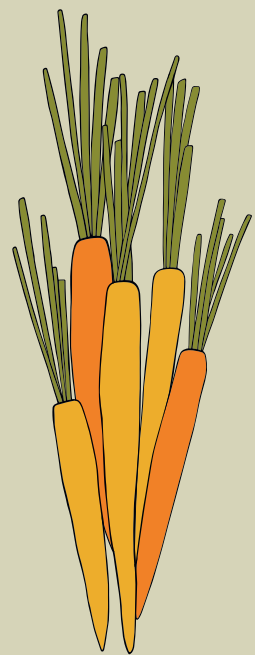
1/4 cup walnuts or other nuts, lightly toasted

Cut carrots lengthwise, a finger's width. Place in a baking dish and drizzle with olive oil.

Place 1 cup of vegetable stock with the diced dried apricots, salt and vinegar and bring to a boil.

Pour mixture over carrots and place in the oven, preheated to 350° F, for 45 minutes.

After removing from oven, garnish with crushed nuts.



The Recipes

# TEA

## reflections

A photo essay  
by ADAM YASMIN

I started sharing tea ceremony from a deep well of kindness and conviviality after spending nine months immersed in a San Francisco teahouse called Om Shan Tea back in 2009. The owner became a good friend and mentor and encouraged my *gongfu* tea practice with a sponsorship to be a satellite for the teahouse while here in Los Angeles. From there I expanded my awareness of *Chadao*, The Way of Tea, with a tea mentor based in Taiwan in 2012 and 2013 and shifted away from attempting to start my own tea business.

In 2015 my life profoundly changed two-fold by simultaneously pivoting into a full-time design career and becoming a first-time father. I discovered first-hand in my design jobs the paradox of interfacing with people in their work environments and observing how disconnected they were from themselves and each other. We can speak forever about technology and connectedness, but that's another conversation. So to stay grounded, I started bringing tea ceremony to share at the office and really struck a chord that was ready to be struck. Since 2016, I've primarily focused on introducing tech and office culture to mindfulness via digital detox and tea ceremony.

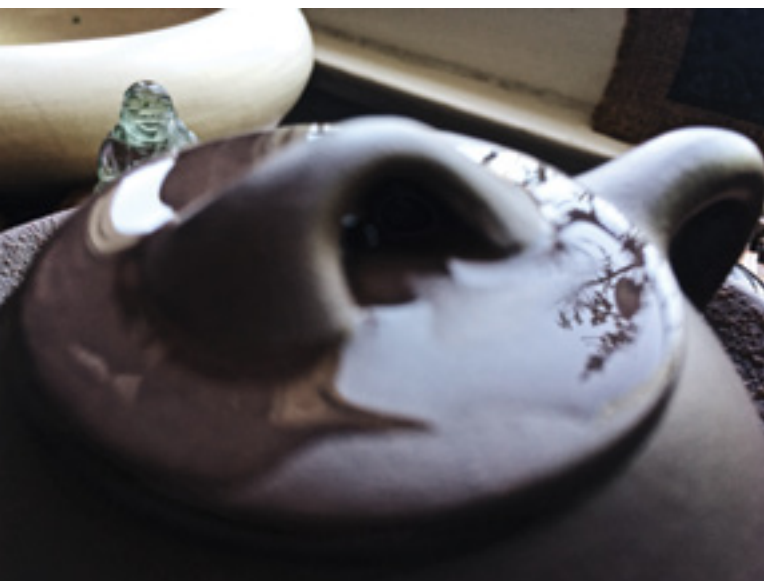




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There always seems to be a spectrum of reactions from people who've never witnessed tea ceremony, so it's an opportunity for us both to express ourselves and exercise some empathy. The connections I've made have changed my life quite literally. I met my life partner, Pamela, while pouring *gong fu* tea at a festival and today we have a 2-year-old daughter. I realized early on that tea is a wonderful social lubricant without the alcohol and pretense. If you look back at the last few hundred years of world history you can't deny the fact that tea and spices (along the silk road) really started our global society. Tea is the second most imbibed beverage in the world after water. So there are many kinds of connections I hold dear to this day while sharing that space.



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Heartfulness



Sometimes I feel the tea bowl reflections invoke my understanding of Nietzsche:

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that he does not become a monster in the process. And when you gaze long into an abyss the abyss also gazes into you.”

In other words, the imagery of the reflections is almost a window for my own self-inquiry and shadow integration. And when I share them, hopefully it encourages the connections and the notion of a clean slate in others also.

I feel there’s so much beauty in the space of ceremony that I like capturing moments and sharing them often in hopes that others will take a moment to stop scrolling through their Instagram feed and see what comes up.



[www.adamyasmin.com](http://www.adamyasmin.com)  
Instagram @adamyasmin\_

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March 2018



Researchers have studied happiness the world over. Organizations have even ranked countries on a happiness scale. So, what have the world's most inquisitive minds discovered? Is there a secret to happiness?

Is happiness spending time with loved ones, or spending time alone in nature? Is it losing yourself as you dance to music, or finding yourself while quietly meditating? The secret to happiness is actually all of these things, and more. It varies from country to country and culture to culture.

In some cultures happiness comes from a tangible practice, like Tai Chi, which the Chinese have been practicing for centuries. For others, the secret lies in a philosophy that's put into practice. Costa Ricans, for example, are guided by the idea of a simple, carefree 'pure life' known as pura vida.

According to the annual World Happiness Report, Norway is the happiest country,

scoring highly in its approach to caring, freedom, generosity, honesty, health, income and good governance. Meanwhile, the Happy Planet Index ranks Costa Rica as the happiest country on Earth. While opposites when it comes to climate, the two countries apparently have one thing in common: happy citizens.

Despite the many differences in what constitutes happiness in countries around the world, there are some common threads. The most notable has to do with material wealth, or rather, the lack of it. Few people, if any, around the globe find happiness through personal possessions and financial success. Rather, they tend to attain it by appreciating the little things in life and, more importantly, the people in their lives.

We've shared some of the secrets and the research behind why they work for the people who practice them. They just might work for you, too!

Self-help books may tell you to look inside to find happiness, but you can also find it by looking outside — as in outside the country. People from Central America to Scandinavia regularly rank among the happiest in the world.

We'll let you in on their secrets so you can try them yourself.

## INDIA Yoga

/YO-gah/

A practice that incorporates body poses, meditation and controlled breathing to cultivate awareness of self and, ultimately, reach higher consciousness.



### Why it works:

Yogis are known to be more fully engaged in the moment, less stressed and in good overall health.



## ISRAEL Sabbath

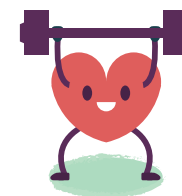
/SA-beth/

A weekly day of rest to put work aside, unplug from the digital world and spend time connecting with family.

### Why it works:

Our bodies and minds need to rest and recover from their hard work.

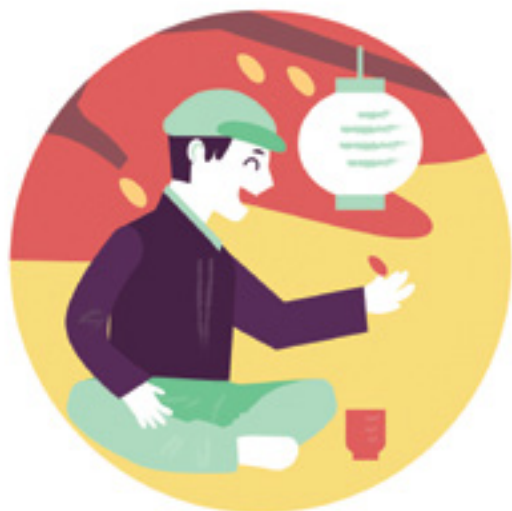
It's essential to maintaining long-term physical and mental health.



## JAPAN Hanami

/HA-na-me/

The Japanese version of “stop and smell the roses,” flower viewing is the culturally-valued practice of gathering to see and appreciate the cherry blossoms in spring.



### Why it works:



Enjoying our natural surroundings, and the floral scents that go with them, has been shown to improve our well being.



## CROATIA Fjaka

/FYAH-kah/

Essentially the sweetness of doing nothing, practicing fjaka allows Croatians’ minds and bodies to completely relax.

### Why it works:



According to Dr. Mark Hyman, downtime is an essential part of short-term mental and physical rejuvenation, as well as long-term health.

There’s no one way to attain happiness, but one thing is for sure:  
**you can adopt any of these practices or philosophies today.**

They don’t require spending anything other than a little time and energy.  
And that’s a small price to pay for invaluable results.



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Heartfulness

# CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Heartfulness Institute’s research department invites grant applications for meditation research from individuals who will conduct independent, empirical, rigorous research supporting applications ranging from \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000 on a non-renewable basis.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE HEARTFULNESS RESEARCH GRANTS

Heartfulness Institute teaches meditation and contemplative practices based on Raja Yoga. Heartfulness Research funding is intended to provide resources to support foundational experiments on Heartfulness practices.

These include, but are not limited to, studies investigating behavioral, physiological, metabolic, epigenetic and neurobiological responses to the practice of Heartfulness meditation, through cross-sectional and longitudinal studies on Heartfulness practitioners compared with appropriate control subjects.

We encourage applications from researchers in other contemplative practices who are interested in applying their expertise to study Heartfulness meditation.

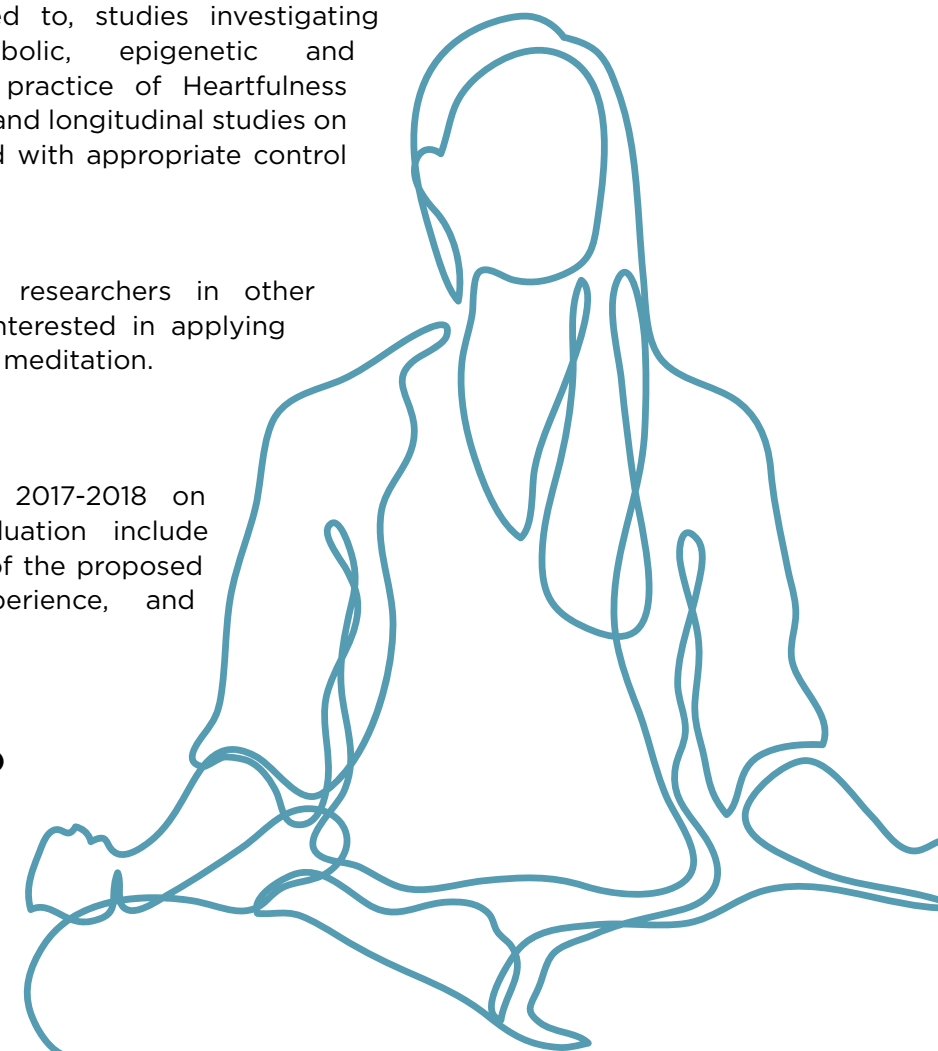
### REVIEW PROCESS

We will accept applications for 2017-2018 on a rolling basis. Criteria for evaluation include significance, relevance and impact of the proposed study, applicant’s research experience, and appropriateness of budget.

**PLEASE DIRECT ALL ENQUIRIES TO  
RESEARCH@HEARTFULNESS.ORG**



Heartfulness Institute  
Research Department



Up

GROUND

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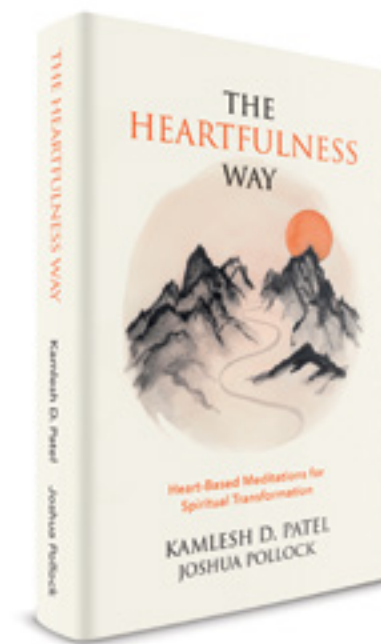


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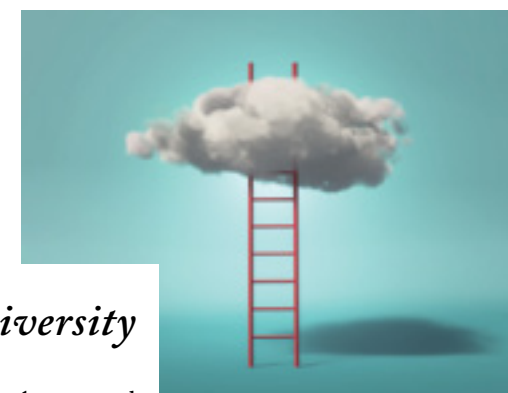
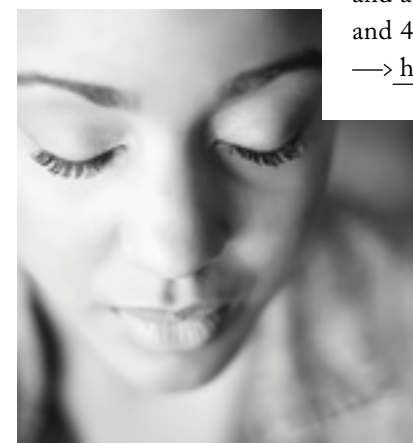


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LIVE A LITTLE



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# DESK OF DAAJI

FIRST, the sensory organs like  
eyes, ears, nose ... receive the  
external signals.

SECOND, the centers in the brain  
receive those signals.

THIRD, the mind, which gathers  
those impressions.

INTELLECT, receives the impressions from  
the mind, then deliberates & decides.

FIFTH, the EGO that says: YES/NO.

Last three steps are played out  
in the field of consciousness.

Souk remains a witness. ☺



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