

OCTOBER 2016

₹100

CELEBRATE WORLD TEACHERS' DAY: 5TH OCTOBER

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

WHO AM I?

Why do we want to know?

TEENAGERS

Finding your place as a parent

CHANGE TO HEALTHY EATING

How to avoid old habits

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

*Contribute to the positivity
around you*



RNI No. TNENG/2016/68243

SELF ● RELATIONSHIPS ● WORK ● INSPIRATION ● VITALITY ● NATURE

ENHANCING

the **senses** of

OBSERVATION

INTUITION

and **COGNITIVE ABILITIES**

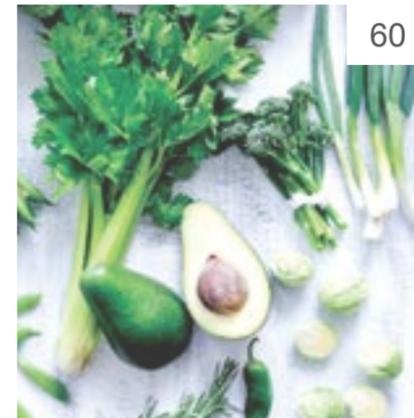
in children



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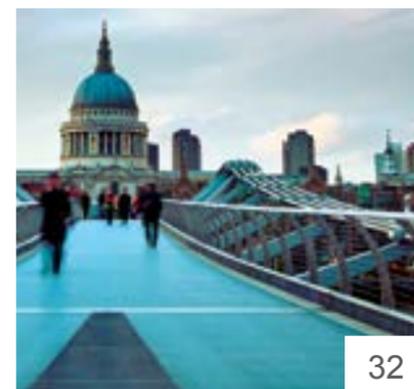
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Heartfulness

Through meditation, transformation

The power of thought

Whenever you have a moment, at any time during the day or night, you can use your own thought energy to bring about change. To do so, first go into your heart and then very gently and tenderly make one of these prayerful suggestions:

Everyone is being filled with love and devotion and real faith is growing stronger in them.

Everyone is developing correct thinking, right understanding and an honest approach to life.

Everything around us – the air particles, people, the birds, the trees, etc. – is deeply absorbed in Godly remembrance.

To experience Heartfulness,
please contact one of our trainers at info@heartfulness.org
or via the website at www.heartfulness.org.

bring about change

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Existence, upgrade available

Heartfulness
Through meditation, transformation



Heartfulness Meditation Festival

Date: 29-30 October, 2016 • **Location:** Bangarra Theatre, Walsh Bay • **Entry Fee:** \$10

meditationfestival.org.au

A Noble Profession

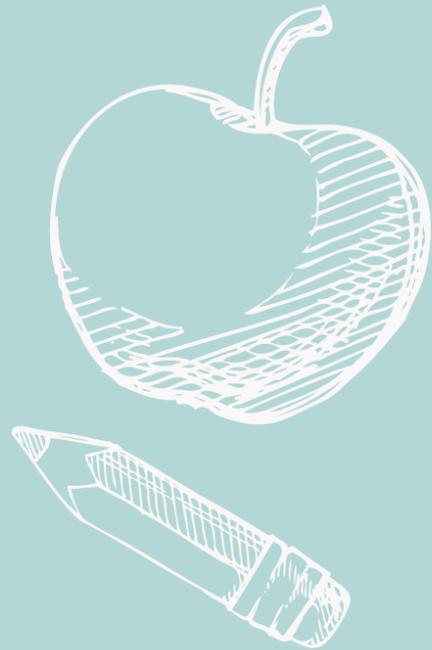
The 5th of October is World Teachers' Day. In this issue we celebrate and honor the teachers of the world; those dedicated, inspired human beings with whom we entrust our children, and who leave a lasting legacy for the future of our world. On one hand their work is valued, yet they are usually underpaid, overworked and their profession is not considered 'desirable' or a first choice of career for successful students. Their role is so profoundly important in any culture. Don't we want the best human beings possible to teach our children, in order to secure our future?

Albert Einstein once said, "It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge." Carl Jung went even further when he said that our gratitude is always for those teachers who touch our human feelings, as "warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child."

So please join us in celebrating World Teachers' Day wherever you are. It may be by thanking your own children's teachers, or sending a card to a teacher who once taught you, or generally acknowledging and valuing this noble profession by ensuring that respect for teachers is the natural order.

In addition, in this issue we have an exercise for those of you who want to have some fun alleviating stress. Also a busy cardiologist shares how he balances his life, a well-known psychiatrist explores group dynamics, and a young writer experiments with an observer's lifestyle and shares the benefits. In response to requests from readers, we have a new Vitality section, with tips to keep your body in shape during the change of seasons. There is a fascinating interview on teenager-parent relationships, some guidance on listening well, a photo essay on flowers that will make you smile, and another inspiring installment about the evolution of consciousness.

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AN OBSERVER'S LIFESTYLE



DURGA NAGARAJAN shares a first-hand example of how the power of observation can change a life.

Sitting on my couch, without anything much to do, I realized that my mind was overpowered with a lot of thoughts, some worthy of consideration and some not.

Life had been very strenuous during the last couple of months owing to a multitude of factors. The funny part was that I was never able to pinpoint exactly what was causing the tension, strain, restlessness, and a mixture of unpleasant notions that hovered over me day in and day out. In fact, I reached a point where even my sleep was affected. That is when I decided to take a step back and analyze what was really causing the issue.

I figured out that the issue was in the way in which I led my life. If I was in a meeting with a client who just didn't budge from his stance, for example, his reaction and mannerisms during our conversation would get the better of me. Now the question arises, how is that possible? Well, it is simple; I took in and absorbed not only his words but also his attitude and body language. These had a greater impact on my response to him than the actual matter at hand.

How then could I change this? In my small understanding, I needed to become an 'observer of life' and not an 'absorber' of my surroundings.

How could I embark on this journey of leading an observer's lifestyle? Here are some 'to dos' I have been trying:

1

Understand that life is a journey to be undertaken and not a race to be won.

2

Cultivate absolute unaffectedness to situations, what is called *stithpragya* in the Bhagavad Gita. Respond to situations with a clear and unbiased attitude for the good of all, making it a win-win situation every time.

3

Cultivate absolute humility within myself so that anything that seems to be aimed at me does not affect me personally, but is taken as a learning experience.

4

Stay connected at all times to that inner guidance within – my heart. This will hopefully lead me to an integration of all my actions and thoughts, and allow me to follow my intuition.

5

Listen with the intention of understanding my peers. Many a time, I listen only to respond, and that one attitude severs relationships and business prospects.

In my life of constant thoughts and unrest of the mind, these few attitudinal changes have brought about an all-encompassing change of attitude.

For more clarity, I also observe nature. Imagine how peaceful and serene the world would be if we all just existed, observing everything around akin to nature ●



WISDOM BEGINS IN
Wonder
- SOCRATES

THE ONLY TRUE WISDOM IS IN KNOWING
you know nothing.

TRUE WISDOM COMES TO
EACH OF US WHEN WE REALIZE
how little we understand
ABOUT LIFE, OURSELVES,
AND THE WORLD AROUND US.

HE IS RICHEST WHO IS
content with the least,
FOR CONTENT IS THE WEALTH OF NATURE.

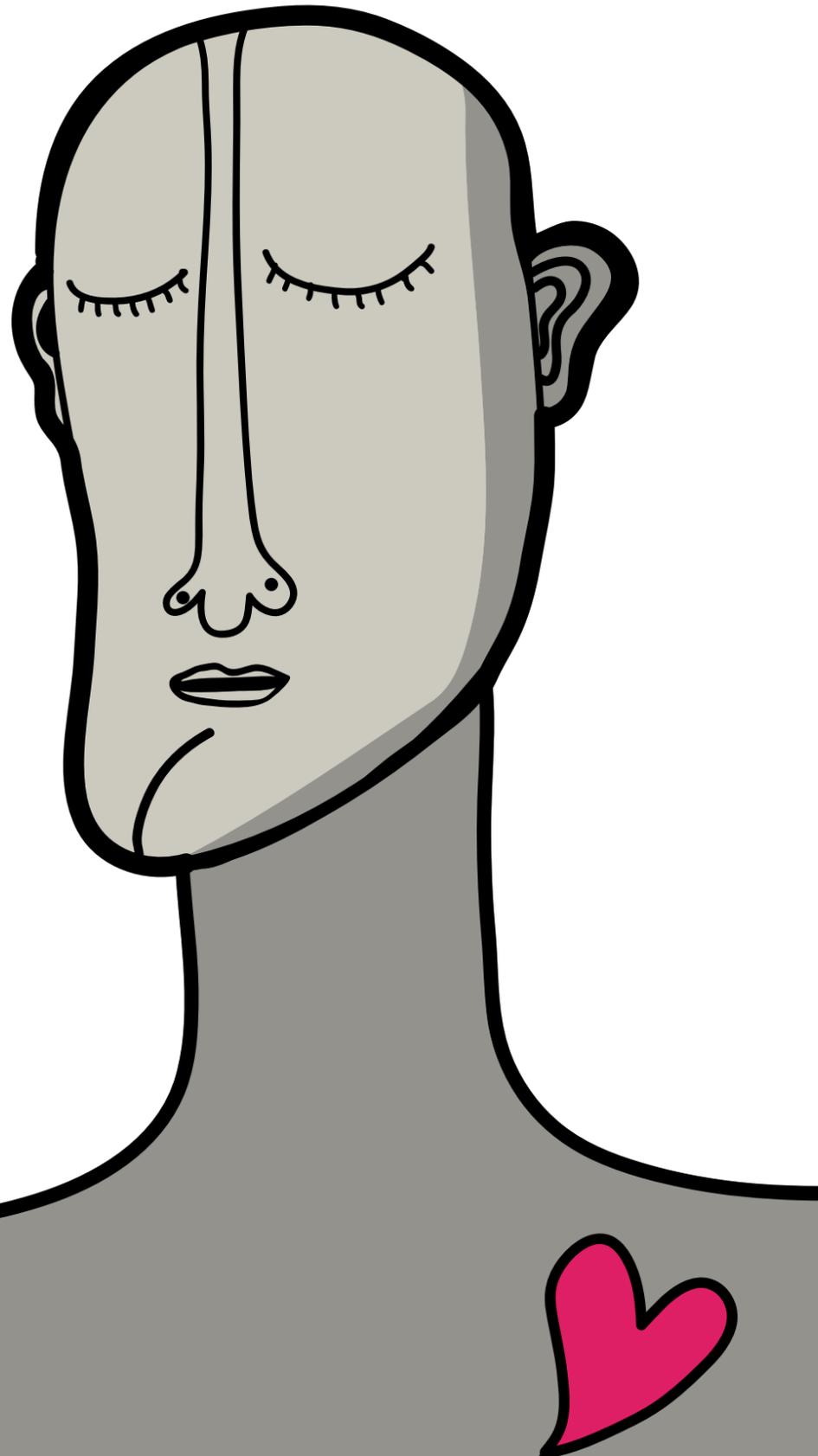
BE AS YOU *wish to seem.*

BEWARE THE BARRENNESS OF A *busy life.*

- SOCRATES

Free Yourself From Stress

This is an excerpt of a workshop coordinated by VÉRONIQUE BRASSELET and EMMA MILESI during the Heartfulness days at the Cité Internationale in Lyon in January 2016.



The heart's simplicity reduces stress

Stress is everywhere in our daily lives. When it is positive (eustress), it is considered beneficial; when it is negative (distress), it inhibits our potential and prevents us from accomplishing our objectives.

What is stress?

Stress is something that causes a state of strain or tension.

What hides behind stress?

Our fears. Fear is part of daily life, and it is present everywhere. According to its intensity, stress will be more or less severe, uncomfortable, challenging or crippling.

Various sources of stress

1. Daily worries, for example, missing the bus and arriving late, the inability to finish all that was planned for the day.
2. Undergoing fear, for example, speaking in public, a job interview, not reaching our parents' expectations, required job performance.
3. Undergoing binding, sometimes crippling fear, for example, reliving an old wound that made us suffer. Examples include not being loved, being abandoned, failing, hurting others, the fear of being judged by others.
4. The growing pace of life, for example, fear of anything new, of change, not adapting.

Fear/Stress is a film we create for ourselves, a mental scenario, which confines us to a narrow vision excluding reality. Our interpretation distorts reality into false beliefs about ourselves and others.

Stress, in particular distress, reveals that something is not quite right, and allows us to question ourselves: "What is causing me to feel stressed or frightened?"

Various reactions under stress

Our survival instinct forces us to act in one of three ways: defend ourselves, flee, or stay dumbstruck on the spot!

Stress acts specifically at different levels

1. The Brain

Stress specifically targets the brain areas implicated in coordinating cognition and emotions:

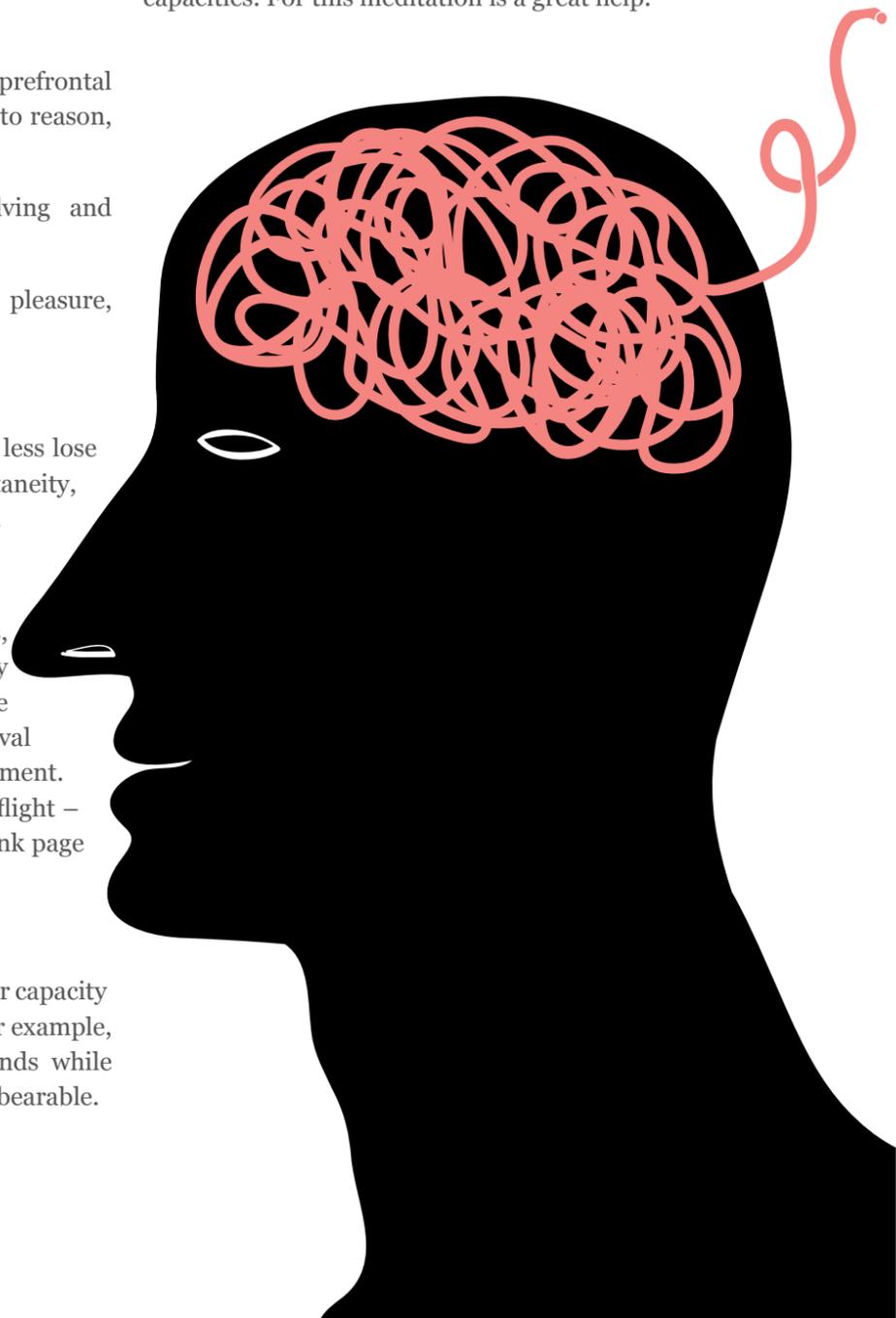
- a) The cognitive functions coordinated by the prefrontal cortex, such as language, memory, the ability to reason, to plan and to organize.
- b) Adaptability – calmness, problem solving and decision-making.
- c) Emotions, such as aggression, fear and pleasure, controlled by the limbic system.

According to the degree of stress, we more or less lose these faculties and this can lead to lack of spontaneity, depression and even psychomotor retardation.

The limbic system is the seat of our impulses, fears and angers. It emotionally colors any information received and grades it as agreeable or disagreeable. Its main function is survival by suitable adaptation to the social environment. Under stress, it focuses on survival – fight or flight – and deprives us from thinking clearly, e.g. blank page syndrome.

Consequently, with stress (distress), we lose our capacity for reflection and emotions take over. Take, for example, a job interview; some will have clammy hands while others will not turn up, the stress being too unbearable.

When we can handle stress, all the brain functions remain active, allowing us access to all our faculties and capacities. For this meditation is a great help.



How does the brain treat information?

Imagine your brain as a multistorey house.

First of all, information goes to the reptilian brain, the instinctive brain. If the body is in survival mode, for example if you are hungry, the information will be slowed down, even completely blocked if the hunger is severe. If body survival is not threatened, the information moves to the second storey into the limbic system, the emotional brain.

Here the information is classified as agreeable or disagreeable. If it is agreeable, it passes through to the cortex and then you may have an answer to your mathematics problem! If it is considered disagreeable, failure is guaranteed! In the worst of cases, the limbic system will not allow the information to pass to the cortex.

How does the limbic system assess information? Like an arbitrator, it adds up the plusses and minuses.

For each disagreeable thought it allocates a minus, and for each agreeable thought it allocates a plus. Say you have a maths problem. If you say, “I am hopeless at maths,” or “This teacher is poor,” or “My family has never been good at maths,” it is a minus. If on the other hand you are feeling positive, then you create a plus.

To continue the metaphor of the multistorey house, let’s say there is a door to go from the limbic system to the cortex. The plusses try to open the door the minuses try to shut it. The team that has the most wins.

What does a team coach do before a football match? He talks positively to the players saying, “We will win,” and “We are the best,” so the information passes directly to the cortex and the team can play at its best level.

In fact when information is considered agreeable or very agreeable by the limbic system, the limbic system passes it to the cortex, and then the cortex deals with it as a priority.

2. The Hormones

The hormones adrenaline and noradrenalin are released in stressful situations, and they accelerate our heart rhythm and breathing to allow the organs linked to movement to increase their functions and thus to support defense or escape.

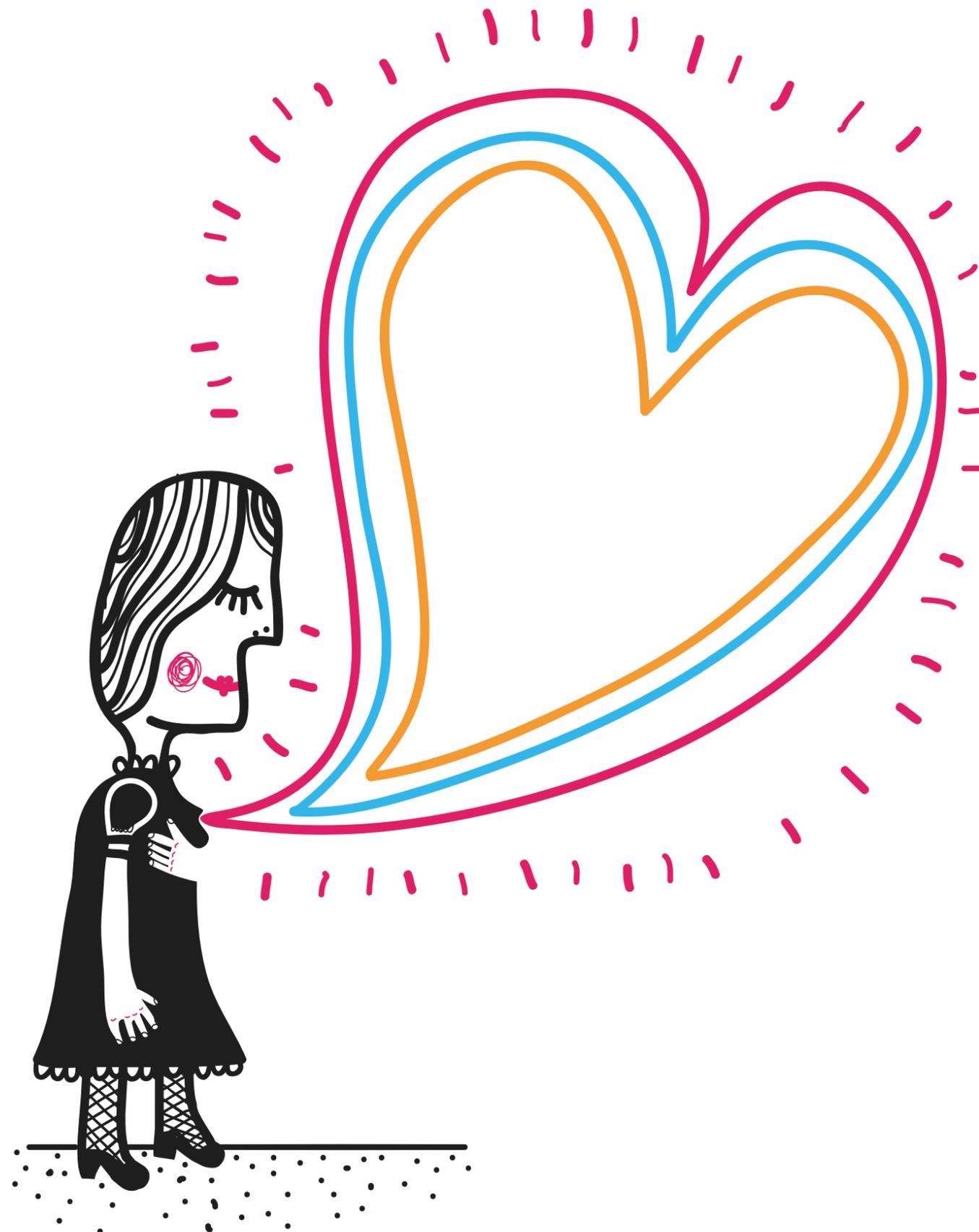
3. Behavior And Emotions

Stress leads to:

- Dependency, jealousy, withdrawal and even submission,
- Withdrawal due to fear of showing weaknesses and not meet expectations,
- Difficulty in saying no, tendency to avoid conflicts,
- Hinders all action and relations,
- Withdrawal due to sadness and despondency,
- Compensation, such as eating disorders, drinking and smoking.

Activity: How to liberate stress in 4 stages

Ask a friend to guide you through the steps.



Step 1: Observe it

Put yourself at ease, breathe calmly and close your eyes. Observe any current stress that you feel.

Identify the emotions that take place inside you when you are aware of that stress.

Identify the physical symptoms that appear, such as sweating, breathing, clammy hands, etc.

Identify how you react to this stress: do you run away, stand up to it, or become inert?

Note the stress level on a scale from 1 to 10.

Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose, and breathe out through your mouth.

Step 2: Feel it

Recognize it, expressing inwardly, "I feel stressed because ..."

Inhale slowly through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Feel this stress as deeply as possible, so as to integrate it.

Feel the emotions that surface. We are often afraid to feel these emotions because we think they are bad and we will become like that.

Inhale slowly through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Step 3: Accept it

Welcome your stress without judging and with benevolence, as it is part of you.

Inhale slowly through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.

Accept it. What feelings occur when you do? What physical changes do you observe?

Welcome this new sensation, explore it, appreciate it, amplify it while breathing naturally, let it spread throughout your body, and feel the energy circulating.

Step 4: Integrate it

Do you feel that something has changed or loosened?

Be ready to listen to a new understanding.

Bring your attention again to the same stress: how do you feel now with it? If there is no improvement, wait some time and if necessary try again.

Note the stress level that you feel now on a scale of 1 to 10.

Thank yourself that you took care of yourself.

When we take the time to welcome what happens inside us and acknowledge it, we digest it better. We give ourselves permission to live in the present. Then slowly we will accept it, integrate it, and then transcend it.

This is our personal work.

When we cut ourselves off from our feelings, we try to stand back and intellectualize, and then our emotions take over. To free ourselves from our stresses is a proof of maturity and wisdom ●

With gratitude and appreciation to every teacher who ever inspired a child and gave them a glimpse of what it means to love life and love learning.



Celebrate

WORLD

TEACHERS'

DAY

on the 5TH of
OCTOBER



Education must contribute to the all-round development of each individual - mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values.

- *Learning: The Treasure Within*, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century

What is education? Is it book learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is called education.

- Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works Vol. IV*

In values education, we are going back from human-endowed values to real human values. From artificial values to real values to natural values.

- Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari, *Revealing the Personality*

Of all the ways whereby children are to be instructed, and their manners formed, the plainest, easiest, and most efficacious, is, to set before their eyes the examples of those things you would have them do, or avoid.

- John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*

Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.

- Aristotle

Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.

- Margaret Mead, *Social Progress and the Power of Intellect*



All in One

IVOR BROWNE looks at group dynamics and how they affect our behavior.

The inspiration for this was a beautiful statement that I found in the oldest of the Upanishads, which are part of the Vedic scriptures from ancient India.

There is a light that shines beyond all things on earth, beyond us all, beyond the heavens, the very highest heavens. That is the light that shines in our heart.

- Chandogya Upanishad

In the twenty-first century, particularly in the West, most of us have a fairly clear awareness of who we are as individuals, however we are much less aware of the roles we take on as part of a group, and of the way in which group energy can make us behave. Our earliest experience in this embodied existence is not that of a separate individual, but rather as an intimate part of a group, that is, the family. The individual personality only emerges later as we develop into adult life.

A group is not simply a multiple of individuals, but is a separate living system, a different organism with a life of its own. As part of our early development in the family and as a result of the karmic tendencies we carry into this life, each of us tends to have a predisposition for a role, which we enact repeatedly in later life when we become part of various groups.

Typically we are quite unaware of this, and believe that we are just the same as ourselves as individuals. When we become part of a group, however, we are surprised to find ourselves behaving, thinking and feeling quite differently. In these circumstances we usually convince ourselves that we have simply changed our view in the light of discussion, although we typically feel confused and have an uneasy feeling in regard to what is happening.

For example, most of us will recognize the following situation: before going into a meeting, we agree upon a policy with someone, and a direction to be followed. Then, to our amazement, not only does our colleague not support the view we had agreed upon, but actually speaks up against it and votes for the opposite point of view. It is important to understand that this is not a result of disloyalty or dishonesty, but it is an instance of the person taking on a role given to them by the group. Once away from the influence of the group, they would often like to reverse their position, but feel committed by what they have already done.

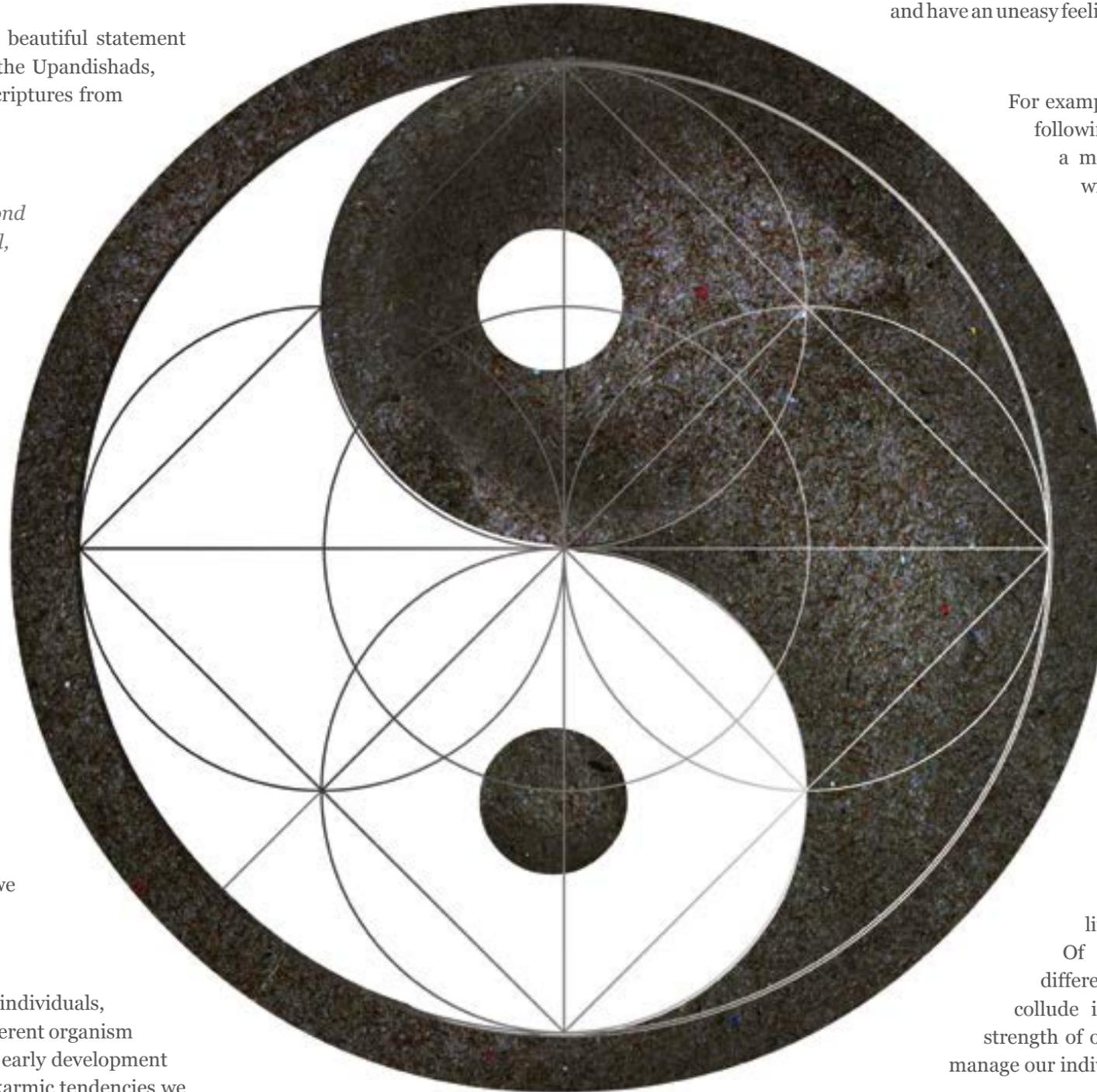
There are many situations in life where we find this happening. Of course, there are individual differences in how likely we are to collude in this way, depending on the strength of our personality and the ability to manage our individual boundaries.

Wherever we look, inside an atom or inside a human being, we find opposing positive and negative forces. This appears to be the natural order of things, at least in this world. This was the underlying principle understood in ancient times by the Taoist sages in China, and in eastern philosophy generally. In very early times these ancient scientist-philosophers in India and China came upon the principle of a balance of forces or energy within all existence. These energies have been given various names – positive/negative, right/left, male/female, good/bad, light/dark, etc. They are always changing, always balancing, always attempting to resolve and unify, but always dividing. Behind this, as the Taoists would say, there is an unchanging Reality on which our effervescent dualistic reality rests. This is not something we can ever perceive directly, although we can experience it.

The more we understand, the clearer it becomes that everything is interconnected, that there is no such thing as a separate human individual or community. If we apply this view to society, then even joy riding, rape, vandalism, and vicious attacks on old people, must be related and interconnected with what is happening in other humane sectors of society. If there is any merit in such a view, we must all have a share in the responsibility for the negative and disadvantaged sections of our society.

We have to ask how far each one of us is dumping the negative aspects of ourselves onto others. Of course the perpetrators have their individual share of responsibility for what they are doing, but nevertheless we still have to ask in what way have we all contributed to this viciousness. How do we maintain it?

This highlights how vital is the need for us to be alert, and to stop any projection of negative energies or negative thoughts about others. It is up to each individual to realize that each of us contains both good and bad, is capable of aggression and gentleness, and that the task of each human being is to manage all of these painful and conflicting emotions, attitudes, pleasant and not so pleasant behaviors of ourselves, all of which go to make up the human condition. The least we can do is to try to take responsibility for our own selves ●



HEARTFULNESS

Webinar - October 2016

TIME MANAGEMENT & PRODUCTIVITY

Featuring : Chirag Kulkarni

This webinar will help you understand more about the importance of time management and productivity. Mr Kulkarni will share those things that he has personally done himself to become more productive during his day. It is actionable, and is for anyone who appreciates productivity and wants to achieve more in their life.

Chirag Kulkarni is an entrepreneur and marketer. He is the co-founder of Insightfully, which uses social data to power customer analytics for products with social sign in. He is also the founder of K Ventures, an agency helping companies with SEO, PR, and Content Marketing. He also contributes to Inc, Entrepreneur, Huffington Post, and many more and has spoken at Accenture, MIT, IIT-Bombay, and Northeastern on marketing and entrepreneurship.

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Saturday October 22nd 2016

8:00 PM IST/ 4:30 PM CEST/ 10:30 AM EST

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{ Q & A } IN CONVERSATION WITH
HARESH MEHTA

THE FEELING MIND

Q. You are a cardiologist and you also practice Heartfulness meditation. Why are you so interested and fascinated by the heart?

HM. My relationship with the heart started when I was a kid. My father and grandfather both wanted to have a heart specialist in the family, so that is how I got involved with the physical heart. Probably from the age of five I was thinking of becoming a cardiologist.

Q. You work with the physical heart, and you meditate on the spiritual heart. What do you see as the relationship between the two fields?

HM. Initially my understanding was that the physical heart just pumps blood, gets it purified in the lungs and then sends it to the entire body, including all the organs, supplying oxygen. But later on, I discovered that research by both scientists and non-scientists has shown that the heart is not just a pump. They realized that the heart has a sensory system of its own. It can perform functions on its own, even when it is disconnected from the brain, and it can also think.

My observation is that the heart is a feeling mind. When you are angry, your heart flutters. When you are happy, you are happy within your heart. So obviously I realized that there is a connection between the physical and the spiritual heart.

I discovered that research by both scientists and non-scientists has shown that the heart is not just a pump. They realized that the heart has a sensory system of its own. It can perform functions on its own, even when it is disconnected from the brain, and it can also think.



This relationship has been explored by the HeartMath research team, and scientists like Dr Paul Pearsall, who have delved into this field and found evidence that the heart is responsible for the coherence that exists in the human system. They found this not only in the body itself, but also in interpersonal relationships between people, between pets and their owners, and also among the members of a group like a symphony orchestra.

They realized that when an orchestra performs, it is not the brains that are working together, as 40 brains working together cannot give you a symphony. Effectively it is the heart that drives such coherence. They also realized there

is not only local coherence: what your heart thinks or feels can be felt by someone else millions of miles away.

Then they realized it is because of the magnetic force that the heart emits, which is a hundred to a thousand times the strength of the magnetic force emitted by the brain. So that gave me the idea that the heart is much more than the physical heart we see.

The way I see it, the physical heart is just a small component of the spiritual heart.

Q. If you read the works of Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh, there is an amazing quote: “What is this ‘we’ of ours? It is our heart.” When you talk about the magnetic field of the heart, is this what you are talking about?

HM: Yes.

Q. So this is coherence?

HM: This is coherence.

Q. So you are saying that where we connect and interact is the heart.

HM: Yes. I firmly believe that. We never describe a person as kind-brained, instead we refer to her as kind-hearted or soft-hearted. I genuinely feel that relationships are formed by the heart, not by the brain at all.

Q. So you practice meditation. How does this help you?

HM: Meditation has changed me. I will tell you a small story of how I started and that will tell you. I was a busy cardiologist, constantly working and doing well, but I was always angry. If you had met me then, you would have felt that anger. I didn’t sleep well at night. Despite being so popular and having all the things I needed in my life, I was not sleeping. I had a lot of acidity and I would get up, toss and turn in bed, need antacids during the night, and I always felt that I was getting a heart attack.

Every month I would go to casualty, the ER at the hospital and get my ECG done to see what was going on. My wife said, “You will go crazy like this.” So eventually she told me, “Why don’t you try this Heartfulness meditation?”

She sent me to a trainer and I did three meditation sessions. I did it just because of her, and during those three sessions, honestly, I did not feel anything. The only thing I felt was, “Okay, I have done something for my wife, and she is happy, that’s good!” So I continued to be the way I was.

But after a few weeks, despite not practicing regularly, I noticed that I was sleeping better. I was sleeping 6 to 7 hours, I was easily falling asleep and I did not need any antacids. My visits to the ER reduced. I thought somehow I was getting better, but I did not correlate it with meditation.

Then down the line my patients started telling me, “Doctor, there is some change in you.”

So I asked them, “What change? I don’t feel any change.” They said, “Doctor, you are now listening to us.”

I said, “I was always listening to you. That is how I diagnose your problems.”

They said, “No doctor. Earlier, we would say one sentence, and after that you would speak, give us some medicine and leave us. Now we feel that you are patiently listening. You let us complete our entire stories, and only then do you respond.”

Then I realized that this had to have something to do with the meditation sessions. I started delving more and more into it, and decided, “Let me try it. Let me see whether this is making the difference.”

Why are people seeing that something has changed in me? That is why I continued with the meditation process, initially irregularly, and then I realized that my anger levels had gone down so significantly that people who formerly avoided me were now sitting and talking to me.

People were becoming more and more attracted to me. So obviously, meditation was giving me some kind of energy that was attracting others toward me. Had I discovered this before I meditated, I would have been saying, “Oh I am such a great doctor and that is why people are attracted to me.” But I realized that this energy was not because of that. This energy made me more humble, and if I start boasting about it, it will run away. So that is how meditation helped me to evolve.

Then, in my profession, prior to meditating, I was rated as one of the topmost cardiologists doing great work. But with meditation, when I was doing a procedure like an angiography or angioplasty, I became more efficient, because my power of concentration had improved significantly. I could finish the same procedure in three quarters of the time that I took earlier.

So this meant I had more time. And I stopped worrying about the traffic. That was a major change. It was a game changer. Bombay is full of traffic and I used to travel between hospitals, which can take hours on end. So previously I would reach a hospital feeling flabbergasted and angry. Now, when I reach a hospital, my colleagues will say things like, “Oh, my God! There is so much traffic on the road,” and my response is, “Where’s the traffic?” I don’t feel that there is.



Then I realized that my anger levels had gone down so significantly that people who formerly avoided me were now sitting and talking to me.

This change happened because I stopped looking outside. I am no longer worried about the cars or the roads; I am only seeing that I have to reach a destination and once I reach it I must start performing. So it has changed me immensely.

Q. You spoke about energy before. You said that other people felt a different energy in you. Why does that happen with meditation?

HM. Of course we all exist in the same energy, but I think what happens when we meditate with transmission and do the process of yogic cleaning, is that our true inner self starts radiating out. The energy always existed but it was covered up, it could not be seen. Now it can be seen because we remove all the unwanted things surrounding it.

Q. So does removing all the unwanted things affect the heart?

HM. The process of meditation per se has been scientifically shown to reduce the incidence of heart disease. It is known to reduce cholesterol, it is known to reduce the incidence of diabetes, and it is known to reduce the incidence of heart attacks. And those people who have heart attacks who also meditate perform well after the heart attack. They have less chance of dying because of rhythm problems or heart failure. So meditation has an effect beyond the spiritual level. Of course it is vital for your existence at the spiritual level, but it also has physical benefits.

So to those people who are looking for tangible benefits of meditation, I tell them that the intangible benefits far

outweigh the tangible benefits, it is just that we don’t see them. If we are going to live longer, we have more time to progress both materially and spiritually.

Meditation gave me a life without having to worry. Otherwise I was always worrying. To tell you honestly, right now, while it may sound absurd a doctor saying this, I am not worried about tomorrow.

Q. I assume you are still very busy in your medical practice.

So to those people who are looking for tangible benefits of meditation, I tell them that the intangible benefits far outweigh the tangible benefits, it is just that we don’t see them. If we are going to live longer, we have more time to progress both materially and spiritually.



HM: Busier than before.

Q: So how do you find time to meditate?

HM: As I said, my efficiency has improved, so I find I have more time. I also use my car, as I travel between hospitals. I use my car to make phone calls, read up about a patient I will be treating, and whenever I have time I close my eyes and connect to my Self rather than looking out at the traffic and getting angry.

Q: So it sounds as if it is easy to integrate into a busy daily life.

HM: It is extremely easy; you just need the will to do it. First you have to experience it, and the

will comes after you experience it. If you do not experience it, the will always denies: "Why would I do it?"

Q: What would you like to tell other people who have very busy lives like you?

HM: Incorporate meditation in your time management, and time will manage itself ●

INTERVIEWED BY ELIZABETH DENLEY

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THE MEANING OF CONNECTION

ROSALIND PEARMAIN feels the aftermath of Brexit.



Something entirely new and powerful has shown up with the results of the Brexit referendum in the UK. For most of those disappointed with the result – nearly all younger people as well as a good chunk of others, 48% of the vote – there was not only shock but a deep pain and sorrow. It was as if a close relation had died. We felt such a feeling of loss. People wept. They felt disoriented and shocked; the world of space and time, of lived relationships was palpably altered. Who would have predicted such a reaction beforehand?

No matter what our differences are on the surface, it seems that essentially we are so glad to feel connection.

Without realising, without being conscious, we had truly felt a heart connection with others in Europe. We felt as though we were part of a larger family and suddenly this larger family was torn away from us. It was hard to bear. It has been so illuminating and moving to come across this underlying reality that we did not know we had. Of course, for many young people this reaction was also a fear that the opportunities for travel, work and future life prospects were also shattered and now intensely limited. Even so, the feeling of openness and joy towards the world towards freedom and expansion is the basic condition of soul.

While we also are overly confronted with far harsher and devastating realities of disconnection and disassociation, it is a small comfort to be brought back to this unsought source of sorrow. It reminds us of how profound the role of connection is in life.

Once I asked some students what was the most important value in life and the answer was connection with others. It is the same in measures of happiness and it far exceeds material wealth.

No matter what our differences are on the surface, it seems that essentially we are so glad to feel connection. It is simply enough. Yet of course we feel so lonely when we do not. A few years back, there was a focus on creating the future in our centers in France that also carried into an invitation to others in Europe. We were invited to contemplate and imagine the future. A special group meditation was given. It seemed to show me a vision of the future when we were all truly connected as one and this was the most beautiful and vibrant and soft experience of being, flowing, dynamic and glorious. The field of heart is the most extraordinary space in which we live and it seems to take such a shock as we have had to glimpse its reality in action ●

BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE

KAMLESH D. PATEL shares his ideas on relationships with teenage children.



Q: Can we speak about the relationship between parents and teenagers? I have two children, and during their adolescence they always felt, “We are right, mummy and papa are wrong. We are being curbed.” And this is the age when they are rebellious. For everything the answer is, “No, I will not do it. My friend’s parents let them do this, you don’t let me do it, you are wrong.” And this is also the age when there is a little separation or distance developing between adolescent children and parents. What is your advice on this, and how do you mend this relationship?

Daaji: You cannot manhandle children at that age. If you are too strong they will break. If you are too weak they will become spoilt. The most important thing is how you prepare them for the future from day one. You cannot expect to see a change in them when they have turned twelve or thirteen.

There is no easy solution. We have to support them to a certain extent, for example, “I don’t mind you going out, but by this time you should come back.” Does that mean they will postpone or pre-poned the activities which are not so good? We don’t know. We have to trust them also. Have confidence that they will not do anything wrong.

{ Q & A }

IN CONVERSATION
WITH DAAJI

This rhythm has to be placed in their hearts from a young age. When they are teenagers, an inner awakening is there in them, and they are slowly shifting mentally and emotionally from their dependence on their parents to their own self. They are searching, and they are discovering things. Our job is to guide them in the right direction.

If you constantly nag them and warn them, it frustrates them. Over carefulness from the parents’ side destroys the relationship. Be careful, but don’t show it. Be very subtle, and share stories with them – beautiful stories, inspiring stories. The problem is that we have stopped reading stories to them at bedtime. Even when they are thirteen, fourteen, fifteen or eighteen, why not even when they are at thirty, share a nice story with them. Share a nice joke with them. That will make them think.

At every age, parents must change what they offer. It is very important. For example, grandparents in a family don’t sleep long hours because of old age. They wake up by four and they see their grandchild of four or five years still sleeping. They say, “Wake up! We used to wake up early. See I am an old man, but I still wake up early. You must study.” This is not right. Nature makes it mandatory for little children to have a longer spell of sleep for their own growth. We have to let that happen. That is the age when they wake up late.

When children are awake, we can intensify their observational capacity, starting with how a flower blooms, how the stars shine – keep them busy with inspiring things. Let them count the stars. It is a beautiful moment actually. Let them see the leaves changing colours every day. Take the child every day to the same tree or plant and say, “Look at this tree. We’ll come back tomorrow and we will see the colour.” Continuously keep at these activities. Bring a coffee cup, fill it with soil, put some seeds in the soil, and see how new life sprouts. This training in observation that we give right from the beginning is very important.

Now all this is up to a certain age. Afterwards we can teach them regularity in life: wake up early in the morning, how to sit, how to talk, the kind of music to listen to, etc. This rhythm has to be placed in their hearts from a young age. When they are teenagers, an inner awakening is there in them, and they are slowly shifting mentally and emotionally from their dependence on their parents to their own self. They are searching, and they are discovering things. Our job is to guide them in the right direction.

Don't be bossy. Don't lecture them. If your child says, "I want to try this out," you can say, "Okay, go ahead. Let's see what happens." Don't always be so negative. Don't always question, "What were you doing?" You are putting your child on the defensive. You are teaching him how to lie. You could say instead, "I wish I had known; I would have picked you up, my son or my daughter."

Conversation is important, and communication is very important. Joking is the most important thing. Jokes that you used to share with little children do not need to stop as they become teenagers. Story sharing can continue. When you read a profound philosophical message from any source, share it with them with a lot of joy: "My child, listen to this, how wonderful it is."

And when they do something wrong, it is not the end of the world. Children are not stupid. They know that they have made a mistake, but we make it worse by reminding them, "You see what you have done. I knew you were going to do this." Then they rebel. They already know that they have made a mistake and feel bad about it; now you are rubbing salt into the wound.

You have to be sympathetic in a very indirect way also. Behave as though you don't know anything, because their pride is riding high at that time. They don't want to show their mistakes to the parents whom they adore so much. "I don't want to let my parents down" is also there. Even though a child may be going haywire, yet this inner sense is always prevailing. That is why they lie. That is why they hide. Otherwise if they were so proud of their actions they would do it right in front of you. Their conscience is still active, still alive.

But there are many parents these days who rear their children according to their desire and passion. So what is your desire, what is your passion, what do you want to create in your child? How are you going to design the destiny of your child? As your children grow, at every age, your approach to them must change. Once those children become adults and marry, they have their own lives, so why interfere? When they come to you, be the best you can be. Give the best you can, but there is no

Conversation is important, and communication is very important. Joking is the most important thing. Jokes that you used to share with little children do not need to stop as they become teenagers. Story sharing can continue. When you read a profound philosophical message from any source, share it with them with a lot of joy, "My child, listen to this, how wonderful it is."



point interfering. Nagging them does not work: "You must do this; you must not do that." Don't give them the chance to say you are stupid.

Also, be ahead of your children at the technological level, at the knowledge level. We stop learning things, and that is why our children are able to say, "Oh! You don't even know this!" At least have some idea about certain advancements, and the changes happening in the world. You cannot insulate yourself from the things that are happening.

Changes and trends need not be bad. They can be very ennobling. Now it has become a much freer society I would say, but we are paying a price for it, we are having a war! I mean there is so much boiling and mixing happening, like never before. I don't think there was ever a period in the history of the human race like today. It is extremely unique. Extremely intense changes are taking place. At a good level there are intense changes, and at a bad level also there are intense changes. And we must help our children to go in the right direction.

Sometimes they make mistakes, and you are watching. Don't let them go too far. Keep on showing them sensitively and sensibly about the perils, but not by becoming negative. Then they realise, "My mom or my papa told me that, but I didn't listen." And when such things happen a few times they will have the confidence that, "They are more experienced than me. Now it is time to listen."

This can happen only when you give them the freedom to do certain things. Let them make mistakes. Let them understand on their own that you advised them correctly. Slowly they will have more confidence that, "My parents are wise." Of course it is not always universal, as exceptions are always there in life situations, but by and large respect will be greater when you don't interfere.

You have to be very indirect. You have to play your role in such a way that children don't feel that you are influencing them in any way. Always be guided by your heart. When you meditate, you will receive the guidance: "This is what I should be doing or not doing."

Q: Some parents I know were distraught because they found out that their teenage son had started smoking and drinking a glass of beer with his friends. And there was a showdown in the house. How does one handle that situation?

Daaji: Give some level of liberty to your child. Smoking is not the end of the world. Drinking is also not the end of the world. It is not that you are giving them freedom to do all these things, but at times you have to let children learn certain lessons on their own by making mistakes. When you see that he or she is smoking, find some funny stories or movies depicting the negative effects of such a bad habit and share it with them. There is a lot of information available on drugs, drinking etc. Provide it to them.

Help your children face peer pressure in doing or not doing certain things with their friends. Peer pressure kills them. We have to help them remove the guilt that develops because of such peer pressure. We have to give them the confidence that “You have the ability to say ‘no’ to certain things. Use your wisdom; guide your friends. They can be foolish but you are wiser. If you go ahead and do it, see the impact of it on your physical system and mental system.” If they still insist, go ahead and give them the freedom. Tell them, “I will buy you a carton of cigarettes, but see for yourself how it affects your studies and your physical well-being.” Show them all the negative things that can happen because of such indulgence.

I remember in the eighties, when my boys were born one after the other, I used to get a newsletter on how to raise children. The number one suggestion was, “Never say, ‘Do this’ directly.” It is a beautiful suggestion, beautiful advice. Never force a child and say, “You must sleep now.” Instead, say something like, “Let’s make a rule: it is nine o’clock. When this hand comes to this number you must sleep because the clock says so.” Children understand all that. Afterwards, as they grow, they argue differently, and that is a different matter, but when they are young it is a matter of training. Don’t teach them the art of rebelling from an early age. Let them blame the clock! ●

INTERVIEWED BY ANURADHA BHATIA

We have to help them remove the guilt that develops because of such peer pressure. We have to give them the confidence that “You have the ability to say ‘no’ to certain things. Use your wisdom; guide your friends. They can be foolish but you are wiser.”



HAVE THE COURAGE TO OPEN YOUR HEARTS TO EVERYBODY... IF YOU HAVE AN OPEN HEART, THERE IS NO FOE. EVERYBODY IS YOUR FRIEND.

PARTHASARATHI RAJAGOPALACHARI

LISTENING IS NOT

DENYING FEELINGS

"Cheer up. Everything will be all right."

ADVICE

"You should have ..."
"Why didn't you ...?"

ONE-UPMANSHIP

"Well, wait till you hear what happened to me!"

COMFORTING

"Get a good night's sleep and it won't seem so bad in the morning."

PITY

"Oh, dear, how horrible. You poor thing."

PREACHING

"This could be a life-changing experience for you to grow and learn."

STORY-TELLING

"That reminds me of ..."

DATA GATHERING

Asking questions to satisfy your own curiosity.

SYMPATHY

"I completely understand."

COLLUSION

"Yes, he is so mean, isn't he?"

LISTENING IS

OPENING YOUR HEART

so you can resonate with the other person from a clear, open space within you.

GIVING YOUR FULL ATTENTION

as even if you say nothing, listening with loving attention will feel very good to the other person.

FEELING THE OTHER PERSON

and what they need, and checking with them whether this really is what they are feeling.

STAYING WITH THE OTHER PERSON

rather than talking about yourself.

SHOWING YOU CARE

without offering advice or solutions, at least until they know you understand what is happening for them.

ENCOURAGING A WAY FORWARD

when you sense the time is right and the person is feeling heard ●

Ubuntu

a story

Once upon a time, there was an anthropologist studying the habits and customs of an African tribe. He generally found himself surrounded by children most days, so he decided he would play a little game with them. He found some candy in the nearest town and put it in a very pretty basket at the foot of a tree.

He called the children and invited them to play. He told them that he would say “Go”, and the children should race to the tree. The first one to there would win all the candy.

So the children lined up, waiting for the signal. When the anthropologist said “Go”, all of the children joined hands and ran together to the tree. They arrived together, shared the candy, and enjoyed eating it together.

The anthropologist asked them why they had run together, when any one of them could have had the candy all to themselves. The children answered, “Ubuntu. How can any one of us be happy if the others are sad?”



PHOTO: MEUNIERD / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can’t exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can’t be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.”

- Bishop Desmond Tutu



Peace from *The Waste Land* & other realms

NS NAGARAJA shares some thoughts on the science of peace.

Peace is something everybody wants. Perhaps it is one of the top ten highly prized items! What is this peace?

Peace is “freedom from disturbance”. A disturbed state comes when there is disruption from normal and steady functioning. This applies to an individual inside, as well as to a community, a state or a country. By the time I finished writing this line, almost accidentally I read something about T. S. Elliot’s *The Waste Land*. I was sure that I would not be able to read and understand 434 lines of poetry, but I wanted to check what it was about. The ending caught my attention: “*Shantih shantih shantih*”. I was not interested in *The Waste Land* any more, but in the person who wrote it, and what made him write “Peace, peace, peace” at the end. He must be a noble soul.

The Nobel prizewinner had a great amount of disturbance in his personal life. It pushed him to create great literary works like *The Waste Land* that left a yearning with the signature saying, “We want peace, peace and peace.” Elliot moved on from *The Waste Land* and produced other great works, perhaps in the state of peace.

This led me to explore more of the science of peace. The first reference I came across is from the field of practical philosophy taught in the Upanishads. I must warn you that I know very little about the Upanishads, but they talk about *Tapa trayas*, the three kinds of troubles (I had a lot of them!) and how to resolve them and achieve peace. *Adi bhautika* (physical realm) troubles arise out of external circumstances, *Adi daivika* (divine realm) troubles arise out of karmic laws and *Adhyaत्मika* troubles arise out of one’s own self – body and mind.

The Upanishads preach that *shanti mantras* (prayers for peace) can bring the troubled individual out of this troubled condition. Now my curiosity started growing. We all know that a particular state of being embodies a certain level of consciousness, but that itself is a knowledge and we may not have of full understanding of it. In the ancient teachings, *mantras* were used to invoke certain knowledge and a condition in the person reciting them, whereas repeating them mechanically is a ritualistic act with little or no results.



Here are some of these prayers called *shanti mantras*.

One from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says:

Aum! That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (universe) is infinite.

The infinite proceeds from the infinite.

(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),

It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.

Aum! Peace! Peace! Peace!

This evokes a sense of the vastness of existence. The 'I' is part of such infinity. Moving the mind in this thought itself can be elevating. Attaching the mind to that higher ideal, that Reality, even if it is temporary, will produce corresponding vibrations and feelings.

This one from the Taittiriya Upanishad brings a simple idea of togetherness. If we truly immerse our minds in the meaning, will we not start caring about our co-travelers?

*Aum! May He protect us both together;
may He nourish us both together;
May we work conjointly with great energy,
May our study be vigorous and effective;
May we not mutually dispute
(or may we not hate any).
Aum! Let there be peace in me!
Let there be peace in my environment!
Let there be peace in the
forces that act on me!*

The following *shanti mantra* from the Aitareya Upanishad is about integrity and being truthful:



*Aum! May my speech be in
accord with my mind;*

*May my mind be in
accord with speech.*

*O Self-effulgent One,
reveal Thyself to me.*

*May you both
(speech and mind) be the
carriers of the Veda to me.*

*May all that I have heard
not depart from me.*

*I shall join together day
And night through this study.*

I shall utter what is verbally true;

I shall utter what is mentally true.

May That (Brahman) protect me;

May That protect the speaker (i.e. the teacher), may That protect me;

May That protect the speaker – may That protect the speaker.

Aum! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Now, can all this knowledge and understanding of peace come without truly being in that state of being, that spiritual condition? Ponder over it.

Let the spiritual condition create the necessary awareness and knowledge in us. If pursued under proper guidance and with the help of Yogic Transmission, meditation can truly create that spiritual condition in us. Let peace not remain as knowledge or definition. Let it be the foundation of our existence and help us launch our consciousness into a realm yet to be known! ●

Lead us from the unreal to the real

Lead us from darkness to light

Lead us from death to immortality

Aum! Peace! Peace! Peace!

PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLIVIA LOROT

The Evolution of Consciousness

— PART 7 —

Last month, in Part 6, KAMLESH D. PATEL explored the vastness that is Yoga, and its role in expanding our consciousness. In this issue he asks, “Why should we want to expand our consciousness towards a higher destiny?”

We have been talking so much about the evolution of consciousness, but what is the purpose of all this? Why should we be so interested in this field of evolution of the mind? Why do we need to purify our consciousness and heart?

Well, for a start, it is to get to first base. There is a growing wellness industry that has grown up around the search for peace, inner calm and better sleep. This in itself is a good indicator that we are not satisfied with the state of our minds. We are not happy!

During the last fifty years, there have been so many scientific and medical studies on the effects of relaxation and meditation on the physiology and psychology of human beings, citing meditation as reducing blood pressure, depression and anxiety, and positively affecting heart rate, oxygen consumption, immunity, sleep patterns, and the natural functioning of the brain.¹

¹ <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation/overview.htm>



Current medical research on meditation² goes one step further, using the latest neuro-imaging technology and genomic methodology to study how the practices of yoga and meditation affect genes and brain activity in chronically stressed people, and how these techniques can switch genes on and off that are linked to stress and immunity.

Scientists are starting to realize what yogis have known for thousands of years: that meditation can bring about stillness and balance in the mind and the physiology and psychology of the human being are altered remarkably.

So it is not surprising that today meditation has become mainstream, and offered by corporates to their employees all around the world. Yoga and exercise classes everywhere finish with a few minutes of relaxation or meditation, and we find blogs and books on the bestseller lists about meditation and happiness.

² <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-22/harvard-yoga-scientists-find-proof-of-meditation-benefit>

Scientists are starting to realize what yogis have known for thousands of years: that meditation can bring about stillness and balance in the mind and the physiology and psychology of the human being are altered remarkably.

A calm balanced mind gets us to first base, but is that the only reason we meditate? No, it is just the start. Having a mind that is still is great, but then what will you do with that still mind?

What is our human existence all about? We have always strived for more than peace and calmness. Think of a gold medal Olympian, a Nobel Prize winning scientist, a master violinist, a world-renowned chef, or a small child learning to walk. When we strive to excel at anything in life, we are willing to undergo struggles and discomfort to attain our goals. Life on Earth is about evolution. Every life is an evolution in developing wisdom, skills and attitudes. Inventions and discoveries are about evolution. Evolution is growth, change and transformation, and anyone who has ever had any goal or purpose in life knows that this instinct to excel and to push past the boundaries into the unknown is part of being human. It is in our DNA.

Peoples of all ages and cultures have asked some very fundamental questions:

Who are we?

Where have we come from?

What is the purpose of life?

Where are we going after this life?

These questions form the base of enquiry in science, religion, psychology, philosophy, and the mystical traditions of the world. They have lead to our theories of the creation of the universe, and our exploration of the building blocks of matter and life on earth. Without these questions, we would never have discovered the structure of the atom or the stars and planets of our galaxy and beyond.

Life on Earth is about evolution. Every life is an evolution in developing wisdom, skills and attitudes. Inventions and discoveries are about evolution. Evolution is growth, change and transformation, and anyone who has ever had any goal or purpose in life knows that this instinct to excel and to push past the boundaries into the unknown is part of being human. It is in our DNA.

The very fact that we ask these fundamental questions is because we are human. *Homo sapiens* means 'wise man', and the word 'man' comes from the original Sanskrit 'manas' meaning mind, one of the subtle bodies that we have been speaking about throughout this series. Even our taxonomic description of ourselves is concerned with the mind. So logic says that our purpose as human beings is all about the mind, and thus about consciousness.

Actually, our lives are led day in and day out trying to fulfill that higher purpose, even though most of the time we are unaware we are doing so. In this pursuit, we search to eclipse ourselves in love, we search for meaning, and we often search to escape the boundaries of everyday mundane existence, into an expanded state of consciousness, whether by healthy or unhealthy means.

This is what Yoga is all about too, as we explored last month in Part 6 – going through all the steps of refinement to the state of *sahaj samadhi*. But in the last 150 years, we have been undergoing an even greater transformation in our understanding of this evolution. The meditation practices of Yoga used to focus on an individual's evolution to the highest pinnacle of human existence, whereas now the focus is on our collective evolution. This is the field of the heart, where consciousness expands across its full spectrum of existence.

When we sit in meditation and feel our consciousness expanding into unknown dimensions, observe our intellect evolve into intelligence and then into wisdom, our thinking transform into feeling, our ego subdue and become so humble and refined, and our skills improve, is it only for our own growth and transformation? No, the effect touches everyone and everything with which we are connected. We do not have to actively create this, as it happens without our conscious participation. That is how we change the outside environment. It happens automatically. Wherever the rose goes, the fragrance goes. Wherever I go, whatever I carry goes with me.

We just have to let things happen without interfering in the process. This connection will automatically happen once we start purifying ourselves. We will then feel that what we create within ourselves merges with the collective feeling, and we will become part of the entire scheme of things.

So our preparation has a great effect, a great echo into the future. The egregore that we prepare, the field that we prepare, will have its impact. Whatever the future has in store for us, we can accelerate the process by meditating regularly and well, wherever we are, together or alone. It is a wonderful time to be alive! ●



About Kamlesh Patel

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

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

As President of the Heartfulness Institute and the fourth spiritual Guide in the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga, Daaji oversees Heartfulness centers and ashrams in over 110 countries, and guides the 6,000 certified trainers who are permitted to impart Yogic Transmission under his care.



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New beginnings

ARE OFTEN DISGUISED AS

painful endings.

- LAO TZU

Shunryu Suzuki

and

Zen in the US



Zen Buddhism has an interesting history in the United States. In 1893, Soyen Shaku travelled as one of four priests and two laymen to Chicago to represent Japan and Zen at the World Parliament of Religions. He was considered to be an exceptional monk, and he returned again in 1905 to spend a year in San Francisco teaching, and then travelling across the country by train, stopping and giving classes on the way.

During the 1920s and 30s, Zen became established in both California and New York, and by the end of the 1940s it had spread to other parts of the country. Then in 1951, DT Suzuki, a student of Soyen Shaku, began conducting seminars about Zen at Columbia University in New York. Among the students were a number of influential artists and intellectuals, including Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, John Cage and Allen Ginsberg.

Shunryu Suzuki arrived in San Francisco in 1959 to attend to the Soto Zen temple in San Francisco. Also called Suzuki Roshi, he was a Soto Zen monk and teacher who went on to have an important role in popularizing Zen Buddhism in the United States. He is renowned for founding the first Buddhist monastery outside Asia, the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. Suzuki also founded the San Francisco Zen Center.

When he first arrived in the US, Suzuki took over from the interim priest, and was surprised by the watered down Buddhism practiced at the temple. As a result of the Columbia University seminars, Zen had become a hot topic among the beatniks and intellectuals, so word began to spread about Suzuki through places like The San Francisco Art Institute and The American Academy of Asian Studies.

Suzuki was asked to teach a class at the Academy on Buddhism, and this sparked his long held desire to teach Zen to Westerners, something he had thought about even as a young man in Japan. The class was filled with locals wanting to learn more about Buddhism, and the presence of a Zen master was inspiring for them. At the end of the session, Suzuki invited everyone to stop by the temple for morning zazen (meditation). Little by little, more and more people would show up each week for zazen, borrowing cushions from wherever they could find them.

“In the zazen posture, your mind and body have great power to accept things as they are, whether agreeable or disagreeable.”

– Shunryu Suzuki

The westerners who joined Suzuki worked with him to form the San Francisco Zen Center in 1962. The Center flourished and in 1966, at the request and guidance of Suzuki, Zentatsu Richard Baker negotiated the purchase of the Tassajara Zen Mountain Center in Los Padres National Forest. Suzuki left his post at Sokoji to become the abbot at one of the first Buddhist training monasteries outside of Asia.

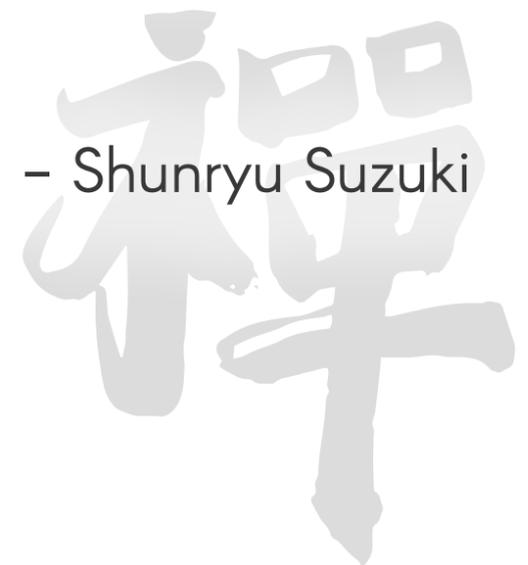
Suzuki chose to work in America to reform Zen, returning it to pure zazen and practice-centered roots. His book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, was compiled from a series of informal talks he gave to a small group in Los Altos, California. It was published in 1970 and remains one of the most popular books on Zen Buddhism in the West ●

“When you listen to someone, you should give up all your preconceived ideas and your subjective opinions; you should just listen to him, just observe what his way is.

A mind full of preconceived ideas, subjective intentions, or habits, is not open to things as they are.

That is why we practice zazen: to clear our mind of what is related to something else.”

– Shunryu Suzuki



THE ART OF SLOWING DOWN

EDWARD YU shares his insights on the intrinsic joy of learning and growing.

My background in movement and fitness training gave me what might be considered a naïve realization of how joyful movement can be for everybody.

Another part of it is learning. There is an intrinsic joy in learning and improving. That is something a discipline can bring about. For example, if you are learning tennis or Tai Chi or swing dancing, wanting to learn helps if you want to improve, because you keep learning more.

It is an intrinsic human quality, part of curiosity. It is going into the unknown. And there is a high probability that this process of learning is going to be pleasurable. There are elements that may seem tedious at first or maybe difficult, especially in something strenuous like boxing or competitive Judo. But even then, there is a learning about yourself – that you are able to do something you didn't realize you could do before.

I grew up with this tired phrase, "Practice makes perfect." I prefer to say, "Practice makes neurotic." It is not entirely true, but most people's interpretation of practice makes perfect, from my observation, is repetition, just repeating things over and over. This is the opposite of mindfulness.

The more acutely you can tune in to your sense-abilities, the more of the outside world you can attend to and learn about, and draw in and process.



Look at the great Judo legend, Trevor Leggett, one of the highest-ranking judoka in the West in the '40s and '50s – what was interesting about him was that he never did the same thing twice. That was his philosophy; that you don't try to overpower anybody. Leggett even said in a public lecture that once he got really good at a technique, his sensei, his teacher, would not allow him to use it again.

When I think about that I get goose bumps. It is so simple and brilliant. It means you have to do something else. So the masters, whether in Judo, or landscape painting or mathematics, are constantly searching. Einstein was purportedly writing equations on his deathbed. It tells you something about the man and why he was so great.

There is a wonderful video on YouTube of Mike Tyson training with Kevin Rooney, who was his trainer at the time. You can see Rooney stops him and says something.

And you can see Mike Tyson slowing down and doing something before he speeds up again, because he is trying to process some new information. Everyone has to do that. You can be this year's Nobel Prize winner, but if you are going to get into something new, you have to slow down.

If you attend to your breathing, for example, and start to pay attention to how you are breathing – if you do that right now, by attending to yourself, you can then attend more to the outside world.

Your own sense-abilities, your own ability to sense and feel, are the interface with yourself and the outside world. The more acutely you can tune in to your sense-abilities, the more of the outside world you can attend to and learn about, and draw in and process ●



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Absorption and organization of sunlight, the very essence of life, is almost exclusively derived from plants. Plants are therefore a biological accumulation of light. Since light is the driving force of every cell in our bodies, that is why we need plants.

MAXIMILIAN BIRCHER-BENNER





A Ray of Beauty

Photo Essay by Rajesh Menon



Flowers give fragrance. The fragrance of a flower radiates naturally for everyone to enjoy.

Flowers give color. They capture the essence of light and create beautiful color from the rainbow spectrum.

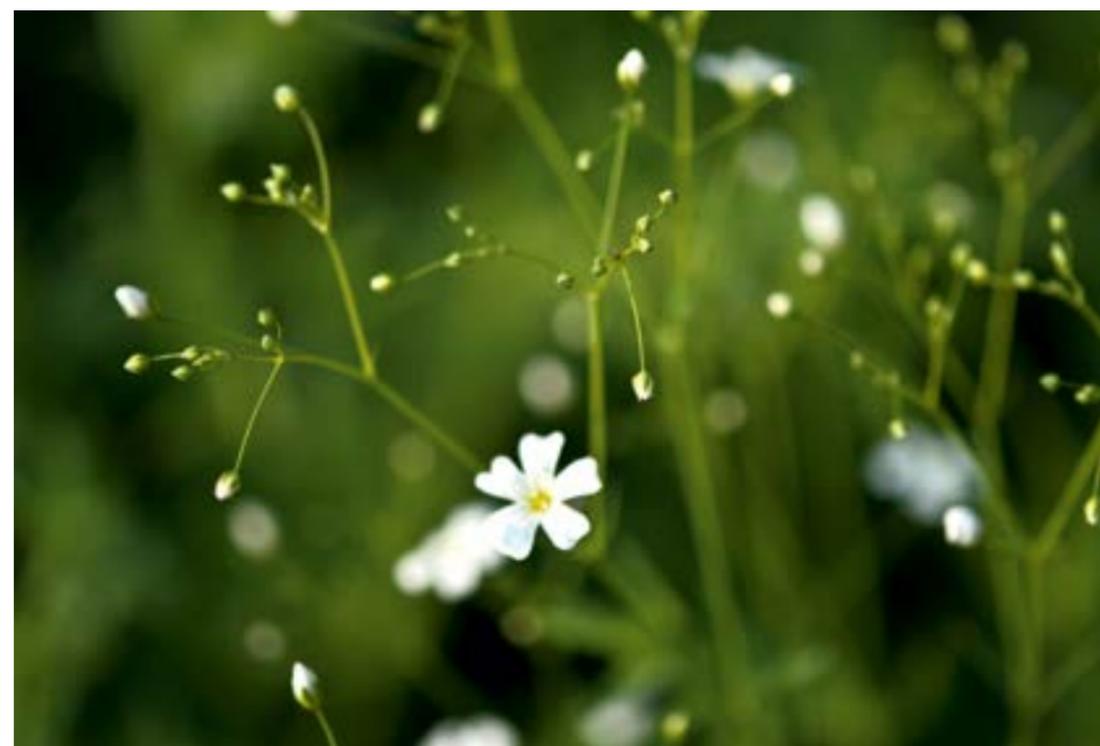


Flowers give life. They last for a twinkling, and in that short time they create fruits with seeds, which grow into trees.

Their existence is to give.

The earth laughs in flowers.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson





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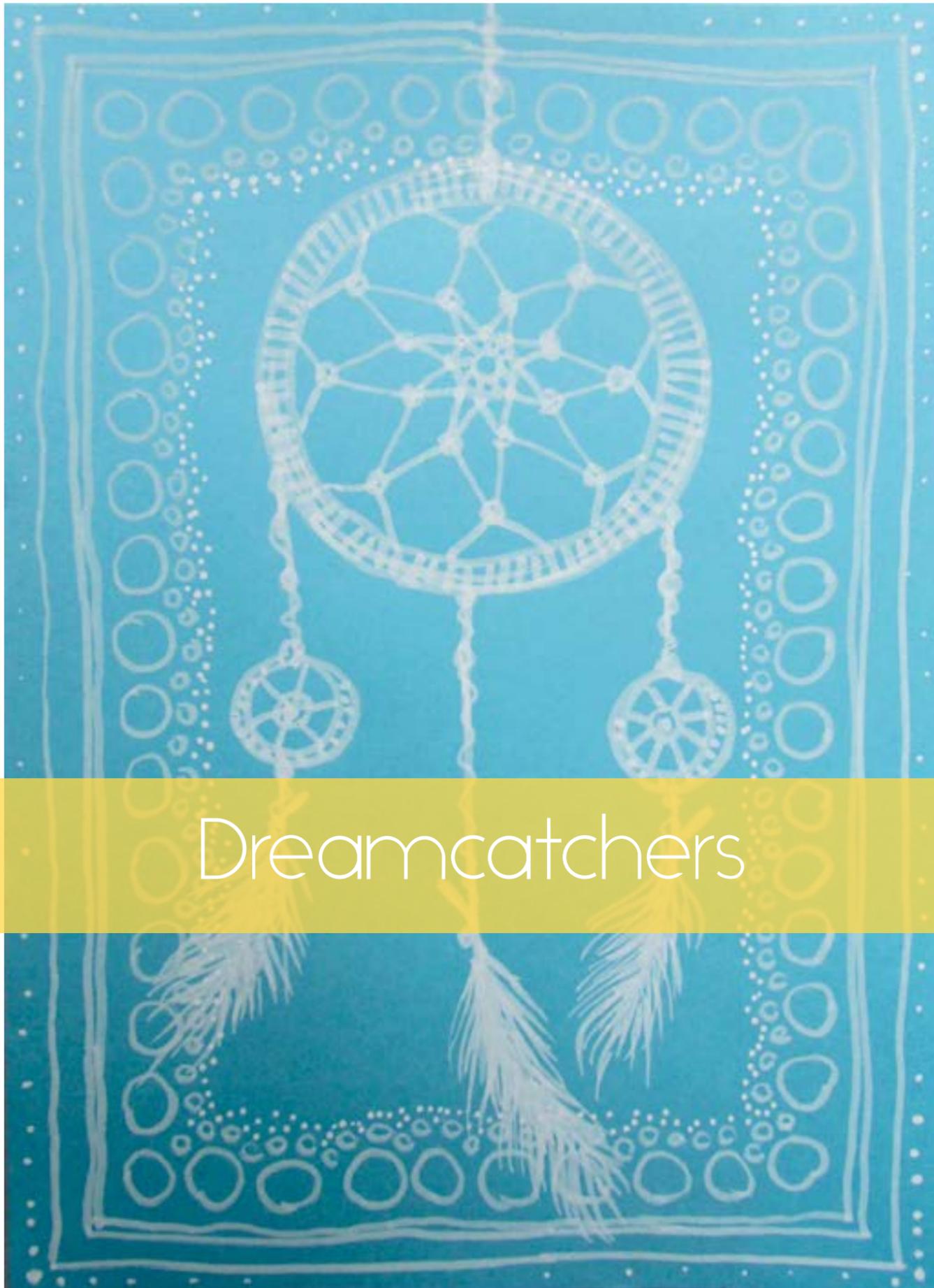
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Dreamcatchers



Dreamcatchers have always been used as charms by Native Americans. They are hung above the bed, to protect sleeping children from nightmares and instead give them good dreams. The design is based on a willow hoop, on which is woven or attached a loose net or web.

Dreamcatchers are then decorated with sacred items such as feathers and beads.

To make a dreamcatcher is a very meditative activity, due to the round shape, and the choice of colours, beads and feathers.



Here is a list of **MATERIALS** you can use:

- Willow twigs are flexible and easy to shape into a circle that can be bound to hold together.
- Inside the willow circle you make a spiders web with cotton strings in different colours.
- Decorate the dreamcatcher with coloured strings, beads and all kind of materials from Nature, such as feathers, seashells, seed pods and pieces of wood ●



ACTIVITY, ARTWORK AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY ANNE-GRETHE KOUSGAARD



THE BLOWER OF

BUBBLES



PETE'S BOYHOOD

As a kid, Pete thought his father was hard and dictatorial. His tender mother was no longer near him. Even the memories of her had faded away. Whenever he thought about her, a sad mist of nostalgia invaded him. She had left him a silk scarf, and on the days when he felt too nostalgic, he would wrap his neck in the scarf and breathe in the sweet honeysuckle fragrance the scarf still exuded.

His stepmother was a mean surly woman, who radiated sourness and meanness in the atmosphere. "No jam on your toast, please. You'll ruin us," she would exclaim at breakfast. Then poor Pete ducked his head, pulled his legs towards his chest, wrapped himself in a big bubble nobody could see, and fed on its honeysuckle scent.

The bubble was comfortable. He felt good in it, away from rebukes and shouting. Progressively, he got used to making big soap bubbles in which he could hide. When he was inside, nothing would affect him, and to others he became invisible. Sometimes, as his father read his newspaper, his stepmother ironed, and his brothers played, he could cross the living room without even being noticed.

At other times, when a little neighbor came and asked if he could play with him, his parents would invariably say, "Oh! He is in his bubble."

Pete grew up, and so did his bubbles.

THE BUBBLE FAMILY

Pete got married and went on making bubbles in which he felt safe. That is the way he went through life. His gentle wife, Adina, could blow on the bubbles with her heart and make them fly up in the sky, towards the sun. It was beautiful, but at times it could be stressful if she lost track of her Pete.



They had two lovely listless daughters. Every evening, Adina read them bedtime stories. It was such a kind-hearted family. Pete built a bubble for each of his kids in which they could protect themselves.

Then he built a large one for the whole family, so that they lived a quiet life, in perfect harmony. No raised voices, no disputes. There were moments when they did have to leave the big safe family bubble. Then the two daughters would look at the world with their big innocent wide-opened eyes.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO 'DANCE YOUR BUBBLE'?

In the family, dancing the bubble was a source of merriment. To dance your bubble, you wiggled to a lively swinging music, rubbing your bubble against other bubbles. It created unusual sheeny iridescences that burst out like fireworks. Or, you placed your bubble quite apart and jumped high up while waving and making funny faces.

The bubble family loved taking photos of these happy moments. They called them 'toto-portraits'. They found it fun, but no one understood why.

LIVING IN A BUBBLE CAN BE PROBLEMATIC

They all felt so well protected by their bubbles, but they could also become like a prison. Sometimes, the bubbles were sulky and a deafening silence of taboos then took place in the living room.

Then, after a while, some of the bubble walls would become as hard as glass, but the person within could not notice since it remained transparent. Well, sort of transparent at least, just like windowpanes. You could look at the world through them and find it dirty, because you forgot about window cleaning. And later still, after a good many years, you could even forget that there is a world outside.

Also, the bubble walls would begin to color. Then everything in the outer world would be seen in the color of the bubble. One person could see the world red while another saw it blue. But in fact the world is multi-colored. Now, where did the colors come from? They came from the fixed ideas they had about things, and from their emotions too.

Brenda, the youngest daughter, was a placid adventurer, who could also be an envious and jealous person. Her desires and dreams had colored her bubble red and brown, something she had not realized at the beginning. The colors had become more visible. Brenda saw everything through red-coloured lenses. Then the shades became more clouded and she could see less and less well. She just felt like lazing on the sofa watching the TV and sipping a soda. She could feel something was wrong, but what was it? She understood nothing of the world around her. Still worse, she could no longer hear she was being called for lunch, or for shopping or cooking. She felt as if she was behind a distorting screen watching the people outside grin at her.

She started reflecting on a way to leave her bubble, but her laziness would soon take over and she would go back to her sofa and soda, listening to a sweet pink music.

Pete also could see there was something wrong: too many thoughts going in circles within his bubble, swirling faster and faster, blurring everything and creating mists. He went to see an eye specialist who said he could do nothing. Soon, he could hear only a garish music around him instead of the sweet silence of the mountain lakes. His bubble had become so heavy that it stuck to the ground now.

THE BUBBLY BALLOONS MERCHANT

One day, he met a lady who sold bubbly balloons. She was a short Chinese lady who walked fast and laughed loud. Her feet hardly touched the ground. She did not walk, she practically flew, carried away by her bubbly balloons, which made her bubble with laughter. She held her iridescent balloons on the end of multi-colored strings. Pete gaped at seeing such lightness and enjoyment. He asked her how she could fill her bubbles with such bright colors. The little street-seller said, "The energy from my heart does it. It changes them into bubbly balloons I can carry within and beside me. As well, they carry me high up in the sky and far into my heart. Then I give them to whomever wants them to do whatever they like."

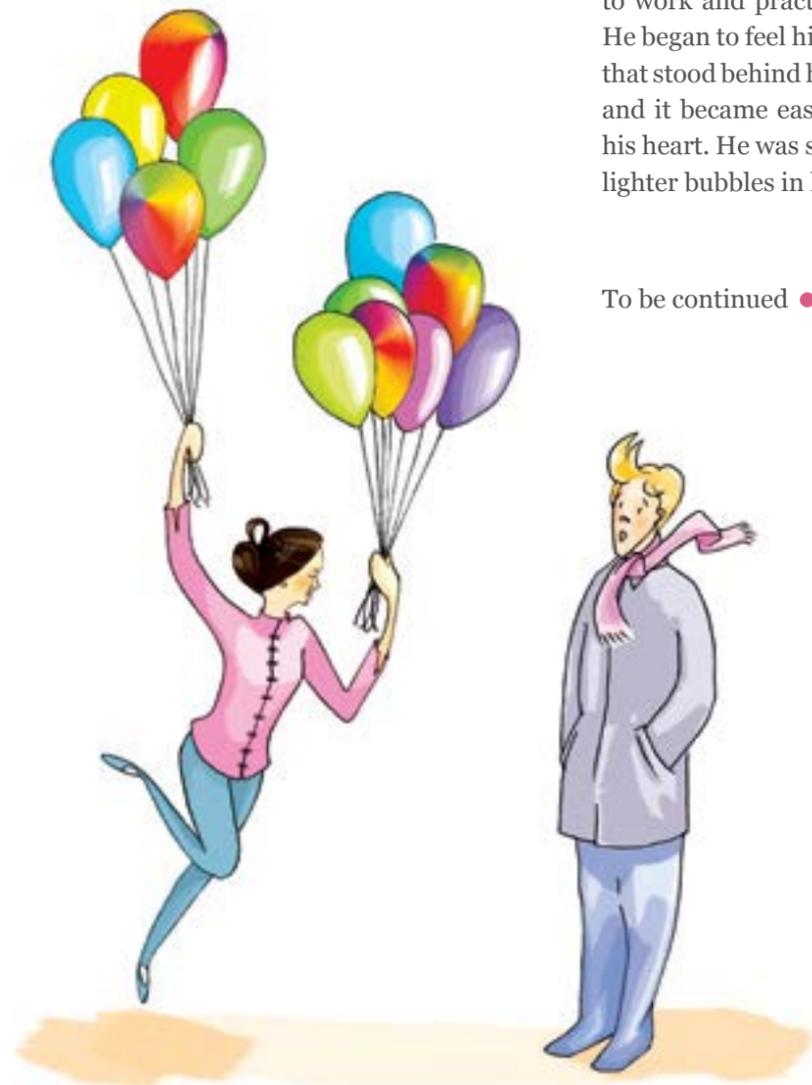
"Please dear lady, will you give me one of your bubbly balloons?"
"Why should I when you've already got one?"
"Yes, but yours are so light and beautiful, whereas my bubble stays low down and can't take off."

"You can make it lighter and turn it into a beautiful bubbly balloon. It all depends on your thoughts and the feelings in your heart. If your thoughts are heavy, your bubble will be heavy. If they are light, then your bubble will become increasingly light and you will be able to fly and experience the joy open spaces bring."

That was an answer! He thought of his gentle spouse Adina, who probably knew the trick. He immediately got to work and practiced every day having light thoughts. He began to feel his heart and found in it the light shades that stood behind his bubble mists. The mists faded away, and it became easy for him to let go of the thoughts in his heart. He was so happy that he started making bigger lighter bubbles in his own bubble.

To be continued ●

STORY: PAPIGUY DE MONTPELLIER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLAIRE BIGAND





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