heartfulness

Simply living

THE NOW OF HAPPINESS

Dr Richard Davidson
ON WELL-BEING

The Festive Season:
LOVE, SIMPLICITY
AND GIVING



Heartfulness

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Dear readers,

Joy is the nature of the soul. It is our essence, our spark of life! Yet it is hidden so deeply in our modern lifestyle that we are constantly in search of happiness. Even our brains have become hardwired towards negative thinking. Why is it so?

In this issue we also explore: What is true happiness? Are we searching in the right direction? How does happiness become permanent? How do we expand it to others?

Richard Davidson shares his insights on well-being as a skill. Krish Shankar of Infosys talks about values and using those skills in the making of a leader. Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee and Hilary Hart share simplicity practices. Ichak Adizes contemplates the role of pain in our lives. And we continue with part 2 of Daaji's *Karma*, *Jnana* and *Bhakti Yoga*.

As Santiago discovers in Paolo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, the treasure is often to be found within, where we start our search. So try to transmute challenges into silver linings, try some silent acts of kindness and generosity, try to enliven someone else's day, and amplify the times filled with gentle, knowing smiles, banana-sized grins and infectious laughter!

And remember, we're thrilled to receive your original content at contributions@heartfulness.org.

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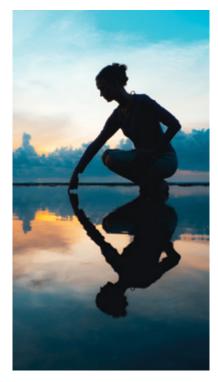
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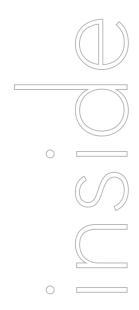
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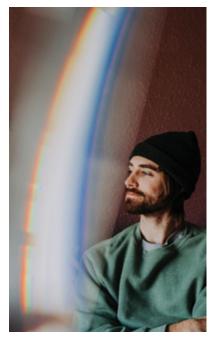
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Family Wellness Program

Dubai, UAE



t is said that the first role models for children are their parents, and the best learning ground for children and adults alike is the family. Our children's real inheritance is not their family wealth, family business or the house built by their forefathers. It is the healthy and value-based foundation on which they have been brought up and the experiences of their childhood spent with the family. It is on this foundation that they will subsequently rise tall and strong, and construct further for themselves and their own families.

A healthy family is a happy family. A healthy and happy childhood enables children to blossom into responsible adults, with the right values ingrained in their DNA. Then they are prepared to take over the reins of tomorrow – yours, mine and theirs!

And so the Family Wellness Program (FWP) was proposed by the Global Schools Foundation and developed into a structured activity of 90 minutes by the Heartfulness UAE team, Dubai. It was six days of healthy fun, fitness and family bonding. The one-week program took place during the Eid Al-Adha holidays at the Dubai campus of the Global Indian International School (GIIS).

The Heartfulness team devised a new theme for each of the six days and the themes were introduced at the start of the 90-minute sessions each day. The audience then engaged in 15 minutes of activities, games and music on the themes connected with health and happiness:







In the moment

Connecting Harmony

The Art of Contemplation

Generosity

Love

Then, parents, children, relatives and neighbors started their morning with 40 minutes of Heartfulness Yoga, following by Guided Heartfulness Relaxation. The adults followed this with Heartfulness Meditation, while the children were busy with value-based activities, games, art and craft, and storytelling around the theme of the day.

Family Wellness was a new concept for the participants, and it was acknowledged during the six days as 'quality family time'. The youngest participant was a two-year-old girl, and the oldest was a grandmother who had accompanied her family. Parents shared their surprise and happiness that their children were happy to get up early during the holidays to come for Yoga and other activities. The program ended with smiles all around, and the question "When is the next Family Wellness Program?"

7 November 2018

You will never be happy if you continue to search for what happiness consists of.
You will never live if you are looking for the meaning of life.

Albert Camus





questions ON HAPPINESS

What brings you happiness in life?

2

What takes away happiness?

3

Do you feel joy in giving or receiving? Why?



Musician, Illustrator and Teacher Hyderabad, India

Recognizing the inner connection with all life fills me with wonder; tapping into this space of oneness, within and around, brings me joy. It may be as simple as observing nature from my balcony: a bougainvillea blooming amidst thorns, a moneyplant creating roots to crawl its way up a wall, a tree spreading its roots deep before spreading its branches wide, birds singing their songs, clouds floating unmindful of the world beneath them, and crimsonhued skies. Each of them exudes a sense of joy and contentment that comes from being in tune with what they truly are.

When I stay in touch with who I truly am, I feel a deep sense of joy within. It may be as simple as having a heartful conversation with someone, a nourishing meditation,

connecting with young hearts in a classroom, reading a book that speaks to my heart, or expressing my inner inspirations through words, pictures, art or music.

The moment thoughts start revolving around myself, this inner connection is instantly affected and I am dissociated from oneness. The ego then shows up in all its faces – anger, fear, confusion, lack of confidence, feeling closed, worthless, victimized – the list goes on and on. At that moment, the way I bring back joy is to shift focus back towards my heart and remind myself to practice acceptance and gratitude. It is not easy most of the time, but is a work

in progress. A quick cleaning of my mental space almost always helps me. And sometimes a good book, a melodious song or an inspiring talk are enough to bring back perspective.

Do I feel joy in giving or receiving? In one way both; neither in another. It is based on perspective. The truest joy I feel in receiving something is during meditation. The unbounded inflow of Transmission brings love and joy; nothing matches that feeling. And the truest joy I feel in giving is also during meditation; the process of submitting the heart is a beautifully negating experience.

A flower doesn't know it is exuding fragrance; it must not know. So I try to focus on staying open and allowing whatever I receive to flow through my heart. That is what brings me utmost joy.



SUZANNE RICHARDS
Retired teacher
Dunedin, New Zealand

Often the most joy comes from the little things in life: happy times with family and friends, the laughter of a small child, witnessing an act of kindness, and puppies tumbling over each other in play. The perfection of nature shown in its myriad ways also brings joy: the countryside covered in newly-fallen snow with that hush snow brings to the world, a fragrant flower opening to the sun, the drowsy hum of bees in a summer garden, and the trickling sound of a mountain stream. I find that joy is greatest when my heart is open and filled with gratitude and love. Then my heart really sings.

Those acts or feelings which close us down are the ones that banish joy in a second. Negativity, harsh words, unkindness, envy, prejudice, mean-spiritedness, fear, discontent, resentment and revenge are just a few. Some feelings open us up and others close us down. The ones that close us down close us off from the part of ourselves that would enable us to get more enjoyment from life, and also close us off from others. At worst we feel isolated and alone.

Joy can be found in both giving and receiving, particularly if the feeling behind the giving is heartfelt. But I have noticed that there is perhaps more joy in giving. I think this is because it moves us away from focusing on 'me' and 'mine', and opens us up to others.

I particularly remember an annual event in my childhood. My siblings and I would go into a big shop in town with our few pennies of pocket money and buy Christmas gifts for our parents and grandparents. It took us forever because each present had to be just right and each item was chosen so carefully, and of course we were limited in what we could choose by our budgets. Then there was the joy of wrapping them in secret (all fingers and thumbs and giggles and laughter), so they would be a surprise on the day.

Like joy, generosity comes from an open heart. On those occasions all our hearts sang with joy.

November 2018



ANAND THIYAGARAJAN Business Analyst Hyderabad, India

When there is a disturbance within, the one thing which soothes me is to go out and spend time looking at the birds and trees, sitting down under a tree. Automatically I see the condition changing within. It gives me a feeling of contentment and happiness.

Joy is different: it's a condition that prevails or emanates from inside. To be in a state of joy, I need to be connected with my own self internally, and that brings me joy no matter what is happening outside in the world around me.

Also when I see people around who are happy and joyful, I feel joy. We have a helper who always greets us with a smile. That smile is not superficial; it comes from within. When I see her, it gives me so much joy. Her husband is no more, and there are so many other things going on in her life, but in spite of all that she comes with a big smile.

When I see such contentment in an individual, I feel very, very joyful.

When we are not connected within, when there are expectations, there is no joy. Joy is forgiveness, selflessness and unconditional.

Do I feel joy in giving or receiving? Both! The moment I feel I'm giving something, there is no meaning to it. The importance of giving goes. When I receive something I feel very grateful, because I experience what I am receiving. When I give someone what I like the most and see the joy or happiness on their face, I feel content and joyful.



TERESA VALENTINE
Academic editor
Atlanta, USA

What brings joy? Community, cooperation, unity. When people come together for something they love - something they share and believe in. When hands and minds are creating, eyes are alight, hearts are open. When something that must be Love permeates everything. And engagement work, learning, helping or just enjoying – is important, because joy is not passive. It emanates from the collective hearts, flows through each individual and again back to imbue the whole, bringing with it the best that each individual can offer. So, it is about working and sharing together from the heart. I can experience peace and serenity on my own, but joy, for me, comes from community.

What takes joy away? Isolation, judgment, comparison – on my part. I worry that I've failed at x, or I wish I could do y, or I hope that z will happen. All things that have

to do with me versus life, fate, the world. Things that create a sense of separateness, and along with it worry and other forms of fear. When I feel this condition, I tend to react to life as if it's something that is happening to me, not something I am part of. And I realize that what I need to get past it is completely internal. It may take some time apart, some reflection or cleaning away of negativity, but I have to reconnect with that unitive place within my own heart, and the sense of separateness leaves.

It's easy for me to feel joy in giving; I'm trying to learn the joy of receiving. In fact, I became aware of this mystery recently, when several people helped me with a project that was important to me. They gave so freely of their time and talents that I felt I couldn't repay them adequately. I found myself, though grateful, also uneasy - and I wondered at it. Because I know in my heart that, as the Buddhist teaching goes, 'There is no giver and no receiver.' So, what was resisting in me? I pondered it and felt it was my ego; it saw the equation of giver and receiver as separate and, ideally, even. But when I looked into my heart, I could see that in love we are united and in balance.



When I give to another, regardless if the action is big or small, by supporting another person it can bring unexpected joy. This in some ways actually seems stupid to me, as giving to another is a very natural thing to do!

JUDITH POLSTON
Therapeutic Bodyworker,
Reflexologist & Polarity
Therapist
Langley, B.C. Canada

As I age, whenever I see a sweet baby or observe animals – dogs, cows, horses etc. – it immediately fills me with joy and my heart feels lighter. Being with my lovely amazing daughter and listening to her life stories brings happiness. I actually feel joy from food by eating a healthy vegan diet. On the spiritual side, when I see another human being grow and change it fills me with joy for them and their success.

I'm just discovering joy, so really it is a new aspect. I've felt peace, profound spiritual conditions, but joy eluded me. I've not missed it; I just never knew exactly what it felt like. Joy is not 'taken away' by anything. It's more allowing it to happen and appreciating it as we become simpler and in tune with our own Nature.

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Simplicity

LLEWELLYN VAUHGAN-LEE challenges us to examine the ceaseless demands of today's world that so easily fill up our days. With our smart phones and computer screens we often remain caught on the surface of our lives, amidst the noise and chatter that continually distract us, that stops us from being rooted in our true nature. Unaware we are drowned deeper and deeper in a culture of soulless materialism.

In response, along with HILARY HART, he finds it more and more important to have outer activities that can connect us to what is more natural and help us live in relationship to the deep root of our being, and in an awareness of the moment which alone can give real meaning to our everyday existence. Over the years he has developed a number of simple practices that bring together action and a quality of mindfulness, or deepening awareness, that can nourish our lives in hidden ways. These activities, like mindful walking, cooking with love and attention, can reconnect us with the web of life, our natural interconnection with life in its beauty and wonder. They can help us 'declutter' our outer life and instead become rooted in what is simple and real. They can help us to return to joy. One of these practices, which combines action with mindfulness, is simplicity.

Simplicity, patience, compassion.

These three are your greatest treasures.

Simple in actions and in thoughts,
you return to the source of being.

Patient with both friends and enemies,
you accord with the way things are.

Compassionate toward yourself,
you reconcile all beings
in the world.

Lao Tsu



he boat people of Southeast Asia, the Moken, have few possessions. They can only carry what they need in their small boats. They also have no word in their language for 'worry'. But when the tsunami came, they were attentive and watchful of the water; they saw the sea first come high on the beach and then recede far out. They remembered their stories, their myths of what happens to the seas, and so took their boats into deep water and survived the tsunami. The local fishermen did not survive; their boats were destroyed. They did not watch. They were not attentive.

How can we be fully attentive when our lives are cluttered with so many possessions, so many attachments, so many desires? Will we have time to remember the stories, to watch and move our little boat to deeper waters? Or will we be like the local fisherman, inattentive to the need of the moment, sunk by the tsunami of materialism? We live in a culture in which we are constantly bombarded, our attention distracted, no longer just by the 'ten thousand things' of the ancient world, but by ten million things. Everything is demanding our attention, wanting us to consume, to buy, to spend our money and our time. And we do not even know the depths and subtleties of this web of consumerism, its powers of deception.

How can we create a space of clarity, of attentiveness? How can we return to what is essential? How can we remember what really matters, what gives meaning and substance to our daily lives? How can we return to a simplicity of life that honors the simplicity of our essential nature, that gives space for the sacred?

First, we have to acknowledge that our whole culture is caught in the grip of unnecessary desires and recognize the poison of accumulation for what it is. We are conditioned and pressured to want more and more – this is the myth of continual economic progress. This myth has become a monster destroying our ecosystem, taking our money and our life energy. It has polluted

our consciousness with its slogans and jingles, designed to distort, to manipulate. And we do not even know the power of its dark magic, how much it has us in its grip, feeding us false promises of a better life, assuring us that 'things go better' with the purchase of a product. It has saturated every corner of our culture. We are pressured to consume packaged food and even packaged spirituality. We no longer know the ingredients of our lives.

Second, we have to have the strength to say "No." To go against this toxic flow, to resist the power of its empty promises and the corporations behind them, we have to regain an essential simplicity, return to what we need rather than what we think we want. Only then can we begin to hear the music of life, be attentive to the inner and outer need of the Earth. Only then can we become alive with what is sacred and true.

Third, we have to learn to discriminate, to clear our inner and outer clutter. In the classical love story of Eros and Psyche, one of Psyche's almost impossible tasks is to sort a huge pile of seeds. Like Psyche, we have to sort the many things in our life; we have to make conscious what is of value, what we really need. Discrimination is never an easy task. But as Psyche is aided in her task by some willing ants, we too have help, in the form of an instinctual wisdom, a quiet quality, that is present to us if we are paying attention. And it becomes easier after time and practice. As we clear more space in our inner and outer lives, we become more attuned to what is necessary, more aware of the deceptions and false promises of unnecessary 'stuff'. We see more clearly how our possessions take more than just space, they also take our attention.

Personally I love the old Taoist ways, the ways of the hermits whose spirituality and nature were blended together, their poems a flock of wild geese crossing high in the sky. They lived an essential simplicity that speaks to my soul: their possessions one robe and one bowl, the decoration of their mountain hut 'the moon



How can we create a space of clarity, of attentiveness?

How can we return to what is essential?

How can we remember what really matters, what gives meaning and substance to our daily lives? How can we return to a simplicity of life that honors the simplicity of our essential nature, that gives space for the sacred?

at the window'. I have tried to recapture this simplicity in my life, but today we seem to need so many things just to get by. Again and again I have tried to empty my room, especially when I was younger. But family life demanded more and more possessions – many more than needed by a hermit in a hut – though my children would still complain that I threw out too many things.

So over the years I have tried instead to keep an inner simplicity, an empty space in as many moments of the day as is possible. Now I am getting older, once again I feel the tug of this other landscape, a longing for a small cottage and rain-swept hills – maybe the beautiful and bleak Scottish highlands I knew as a child. But

my life remains full, though more with people than possessions. So I keep this simplicity as an inner secret, an emptiness that I crave.

Still I have to be careful. I use modern technology: a computer, the Internet, and I love listening to music on an iPod. All around me I feel consumerism and its dark web of desires that so easily entangles us, more than we realize. And often it is not enough to clear out the physical clutter in our homes; we need also to bring a simplicity to how we spend our time, how we use our attention – to be mindful in how we live.

The practice of meditation and mindfulness can clear the clutter of our minds. A few trips to the goodwill or charity store can clear the clutter from our homes. And then continual attention is needed so that the currents of accumulation do not fill the empty space we have created.

And beyond the clutter of thoughts and things, we also have to watch that we are not caught in constant activity, our culture's emphasis on endless 'doing' rather than 'being'. We need space in order to watch, to listen, to walk, to breathe – to be present. The *Tao Te Ching* teaches the value of not doing:

Less and less is done until nothing is done, When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.

Through a quality of emptiness we can access a deeper rhythm than the surface jangle of constant activity. We used to be held by the rhythms of the seasons and the soil. Now we have to struggle to return to a rhythm and a space that are not toxic with consumption, that belong to the seasons of the sacred, where life still flows true to its essential nature. Simplicity, patience, and compassion can guide and keep us inwardly aligned. Gradually we can once again listen to the Earth, to Her wisdom and beauty; we can feel the beating of both Her heart and ours. We can feel again the deep belonging that allows us to be present in every moment,

not as a practice but a simple state of being. We can remember why we are here.

SIMPLICITY PRACTICE

Simplicity is the essence of life. The word itself comes from the Latin *simplex*, meaning uncompounded or composed of a single part. Simple things reflect this essential nature, which belongs to everything in creation. When we honor the simple things of life, we bring ourselves back to this oneness, our true Home.

All the practices in this book are a return to simplicity. Breathing, walking, growing food, cooking ... these are the 'chop wood, carry water' of our day. If we honor what is essential in our lives, we connect with the life force that runs free of the dramas of our individual and collective psyche. Here we are connected and responsive.

Give extra attention to your simple daily activities,

like rising from bed and putting two feet on the floor. Pause there. You are awake; you are alive. Take note of how you feel in your body, and how your feet touch the floor. Be aware as you move towards the bathroom, towards the kitchen and the coffee or tea. Be grateful for water in the sink, for oranges that made your juice, for milk in your tea. Drink slowly. Appreciate your food. Appreciate your family, the sun coming in the window, the beauty you see in your partner and children. Simplicity reveals itself through slowness, in quiet moments when you can see, feel, taste, touch and listen. Take time during the day to stop rushing. Move through the day with respect and openness.

Take an honest inventory of your life. Look at the things you have that take up time and psychic space. Look at your activities and commitments.

Gradually we can once again listen to the Earth, to Her wisdom and beauty; we can feel the beating of both Her heart and ours. We can feel again the deep belonging that allows us to be present in every moment, not as a practice but a simple state of being.

Which of these things do you actually need? Which are habits and entanglements that take up space and weigh you down? Which reflect your real values, feed your soul, and touch you with love? Do you need or just want that new thing, that new activity, that has caught your eye? For a short time, try going without some of the things of your life. Maybe you don't need them after all.

Let nature teach you. In nature, we are students of simplicity. The way a tree grows towards the sun, the way a cat stretches beside the fire, the way the seasons come round again and again without fail, can teach the simplicity of what is. The essential nature of our own lives – the cycle of birth, death, suffering and joy, and even liberation – also reflects this simplicity. We might make our lives complicated by how we relate to these – fighting death, avoiding suffering, searching for freedom and happiness – but that is our superimposed experience, not what is. Look for ways to attune to the natural simplicity of life that underlies the complications of our human experience.

Bring yourself back again and again to what is simple, to what does not change over time, to what shines steady through the fog. Ask yourself, do we need more than these things? Do we need more than the beauty of a crab apple tree in spring, a warm house in the winter, the way water sounds flowing through a stream, a cup of tea with friends? Do we need more in our lives than love?

Practicing simplicity doesn't mean giving away all our things, quitting our demanding jobs, and moving to a mountain hut or living off the grid. It simply means being very honest about what we value in our lives, what sustains us, brings us joy and meaning, and devoting ourselves to those activities, people, or things. While we might end up having fewer possessions or changing some of our habits, simplicity compels a return, not a rejection — a seeing through and within, rather than looking somewhere else. When we live from a place of simplicity we naturally find we need less, and instead are more open to life.

Don't be afraid of simplicity. It can feel stark and empty because it is free of psychological complexity and the coverings of accumulated need and desire. But our attention and our genuine response – awe, gratitude, appreciation, and respect – help transform that starkness into the richest of human experiences.

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Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee is a spiritual teacher and author, Hilary Hart is an author with a focus on women and feminine consciousness.

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THE HEARTFULNESS WAY

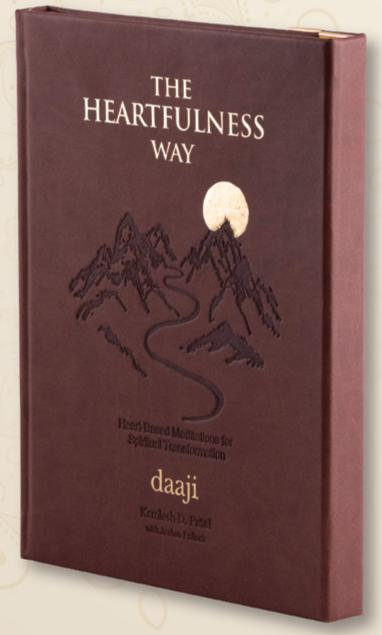
Kamlesh Patel (Daaji)

This festive season, show your loved ones the way.

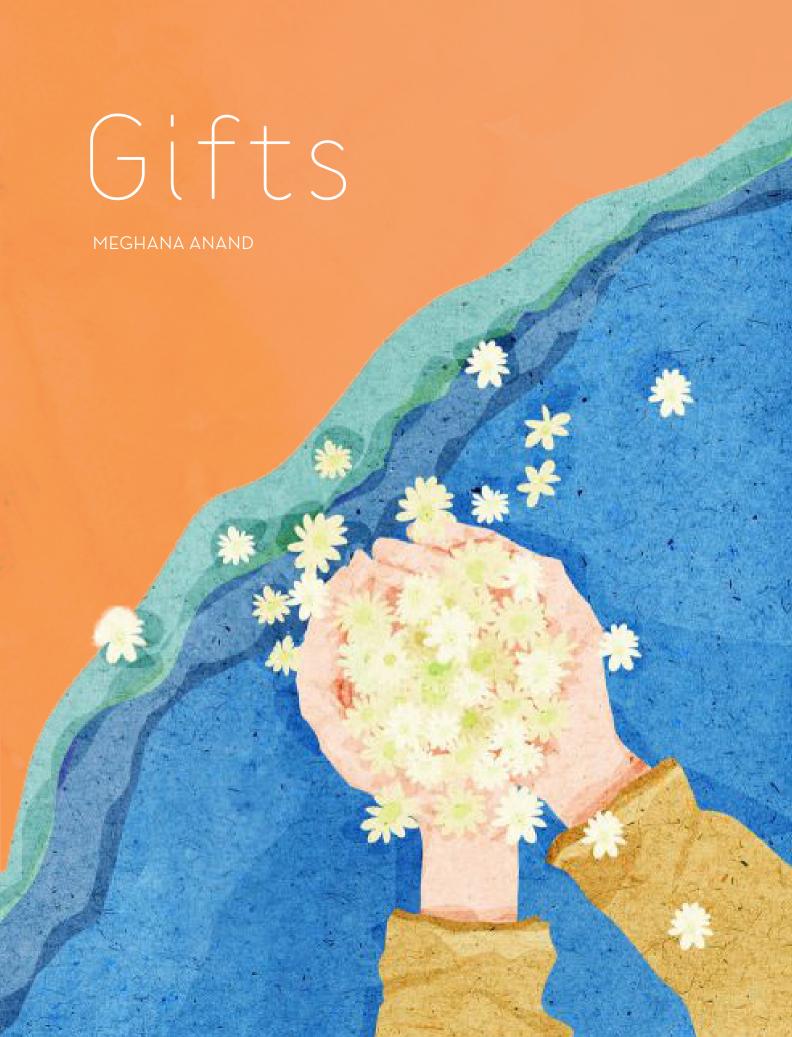
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Sunday morning, up with the lark I think I'll take a walk in the park Hey, hey, hey, it's a beautiful day!

y dad used to wake me up almost every morning with these lines from Daniel Boone's *Beautiful Sunday* when I was a toddler. The sound of his humming in my ears is one of the best and last memories I have of being with him.

The end of the year is special in many ways. It's time not only for festivities and celebrations across the world but also for deeper reflections and new beginnings. Two years ago Christmas was more special than usual: it opened my heart to the joy of sharing and togetherness. The sense of belonging I gained from reuniting with my paternal family has helped me tide over some of the deepest fears that have accompanied me since childhood. Ever since I've been rejoicing the gifts this season has brought to me.

UNIQUENESS

My mother once told me, "There are as many universes as there are individuals." Each of us has a definite role in existence; none is out of place. It is like a jigsaw puzzle: even if a single piece is missing or out of place, the picture is not complete.

A growing realization of this fact has helped me to resolve inner conflicts that are often reflected in



the form of jealousy, competition, a sense of being deprived or wronged and so on. The more I live this understanding, the more I become open to receiving from the world around me.



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TOGETHERNESS

I often like to listen to my mother-in-law's story about how dreamy the world appeared to her as a little girl, from the window of her house on a rustic street in one of the suburbs of South India, until the day she was married.

Describing the transition she narrates, "The greatest challenge was not being able to attend to my individual needs and make individual decisions. I had to get along with many minds and, at the same time, maintain harmony among family members. The ups and downs I faced while playing the role of a mother, sister, aunt, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law and, as time passed, now a grandmother, has shaped me in all aspects. It has given me the courage of conviction and strength to experience life with full acceptance. I have begun to understand that every situation is just a passing cloud. We learn to handle situations without being too involved."

Living together is an art, though it may not necessarily involve staying together under the same roof. The joy of togetherness is reflected in small things – in the way we reach out to each other, the way we accept each other, the way we recognize and regard our inner oneness despite outer differences.

SERVICE

Have you ever experienced the therapeutic nature of work? It is the only thing that keeps me going in the lowest or most challenging phases of life. The effect or impact is even better when, in my own times of struggle, I forget myself and make efforts to reach out to others. It is not easy but surely worth every bit of the effort! It works wonders especially when you are feeling down or depressed.

THE WAY OF THE HEART

Often have I refrained from giving of myself because of fear. Fear that others may take advantage of me. Fear of being deprived of what rightfully belongs to me. Fear of losing my identity.

The most beautiful gift I have received this season is a reinforcement of the existence of the heart within. There is nothing to fear with the heart, for love is its essence. The physical throbbing heart is one thing, but we all have a spiritual heart capable of feeling, giving and loving infinitely. How do we discover it? How do we expand it? How do we live by it?

There is joy in giving. When you give infinitely, you experience happiness infinitely. And it's my secret conviction that the more you give, the more you become fit and open to receiving.

As the world gears up to exchange gifts for Diwali, Thanksgiving, Milad Un Nabi, Hanukkah, Bodhi Day, Christmas and other traditions, I appreciate and offer thanks for the little things that make life so special. Please join me in celebrating this season!

Artwork by Xuan Loc Xuan https://www.behance.net/xuanlocxuan





thought in action

The glory of God is reflected in the heart that is pure like a mirror.

Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur

CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP VALUES - PART 1 -



KRISH SHANKAR is the President of the Bengaluru Chapter of the National Human Resource Development Network, and Executive Vice President and Group Head of Human Resource Development at Infosys. Krish has over 30 years of experience and has facilitated organization-wide transformation and capability development, and been instrumental in building a strong talent pool through a series of leadership development initiatives. He is an avid reader, and loves wildlife photography and trekking. A football enthusiast, he is passionate about teaching and exploring new ideas in Human Resources and organization development. In this exclusive interview, he speaks with V SRINIVASAN and SHARAT HEGDE in his hometown of Bengaluru, India.

Krish, as an HR leader, you have served in several eminent global organizations. What are the values which you have deeply cherished as an individual and which have really helped you to serve at the highest levels?

Over the last 30 years, the best thing is that I've learnt from a lot of people, a lot of leaders, and when I really look at the best people, some of their values are the ones I have internalized and applied to my life and built around.

The first value is all about being genuine and authentic. It is not always easy, but if you can be genuine and authentic, and people know that what you say is what you mean, I think that's the first step.

The second value, which is behind all of this, is transparency. I have found that whatever the difficult problems or tough things, if you're transparent about your intent – why you want to do it – and if people



I have found that whatever the difficult problems or tough things, if you're transparent about your intent – why you want to do it – and if people see the purity of the intent coming across, then even the toughest problems can be managed.

see the purity of the intent coming across, then even the toughest problems can be managed. For example, when you have a tough performance conversation with somebody, by telling them, "Listen, I know, but this is something that is important for you and for the company and so we want to give you...", they accept it. So being transparent about why you are doing something is very, very important.

The third value I learned when I was at Unilever. It has stayed with me right through. We called it 'self-confident integrity'. It was actually a mix of a couple of values. One is self-confidence, in terms of why you're saying something; you need conviction. The integrity is all about professional integrity. If you're an HR professional, or whatever field you are in, there has to be some integrity to what you're doing as a profession. So there has to be conviction, and you have to be true to the values of the profession, true to the values of the role you're playing.

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These three values – authenticity, transparency and self-confident integrity – I would keep as the base of how I define myself. On top of that, I found that one thing that people valued in me was what I call the 'helping relationship'. They liked me to be a mentor, they liked me to talk, they liked me to help, and they liked me to be a coach. So I found that trying to help people is something that they valued, and they thought I was good at it. Therefore, that's something I have built upon.

How do you resolve moments of conflict between the mind and the heart at work?

Well, it's a tough thing. Maybe it's easy to say but difficult to do, but I believe you've really got to see how they can work together. Because if you think that the mind and heart are in conflict, then you're not going to make things work. Somehow we've got to integrate the mind and the heart. Therefore your mind should think with your heart, in the sense that your mind should look at emotions, people, this and that. As you start processing those things, your decisions will become more relevant and more correct.

There could be decisions where your heart is saying something, but the mind or the compulsion of the mind says something else. That will always be there, but if you really discuss and explore emotions at that time and say, "Okay, what emotions are there? Why are we feeling that?" then I think your decisions can be even better. So a little bit of reflection is what I would suggest; a little bit of using emotions and empathizing at every situation. These are the two tools that you can use to ensure that both the mind and the heart work in tandem.

The reflection is always, "Why am I feeling this? What is happening? What are my fears?" And putting yourself in the shoes of other people, empathizing with them: What do they feel? How do they feel? Why should they do it? So those are the two things. Reflection and empathizing are two strong practices, which will help you to get both your mind and your heart working together.

Reflection and empathizing are two strong practices, which will help you to get both your mind and your heart working together.



In today's fast-paced business environment, which is very demanding in terms of results and dynamism, how do you keep your own journey joyful and also vibrant?

In everything that we go through in life, we always go through ups and downs. Especially over the last couple of years, there've been lots of instances where I have been through a lot of pressure personally. How to manage this?

I look at it from the perspective of three principles that I've tried to use. I'm not a master at this; I'm also learning and I don't claim that I've reached the stage where I can manage everything. I also go through problems, and sometimes it's tough to really pick myself up. But there are three practices which I have seen others using, and I've also tried to use them:

Always try and take some time off to reflect on a problem and see it as a learning opportunity.

For example, suppose there's an issue, ask yourself, "Okay, what can I learn from this?" Try to separate yourself from the problem and look at it objectively. That always helps, and sometimes I see that these issues could have been managed differently.

Ensure there are other parts of your life that you want to really work on.

For example, I do a bit of fitness training and running. I do a little bit of reading and writing and working for the community and writing a blog. You've got to keep some time so that your mind is really working on different elements and not just one type of work. Then there is family. Working and spending time with family and being there. So those are the other elements of your life to invest in.

Put things in perspective.

When you go through a tough situation, put the whole thing in perspective, acknowledging, "Yes, there it is." There are others who go through even tougher problems, and there have been times when you've survived a tough problem, so revisit how you went through it.

Also, look at where you want to be in the future: "Wow, I know all this, but this is what I want to do. This is what I want to be. This is what I want to see in the future for my team or group." So by putting things in perspective you can look at any problem from a larger context. If you put your own journey into perspective – what you've been through, your tough times, and the things you've overcome – then you see that the issues don't become so big. So change your perspective, and identify where any problem fits in the larger journey or objective.

These three principles will definitely help you to keep going. Even if you go through ups and downs, you will move forward. I don't say that I've mastered this. There are others who've done much better, and we should learn from them.

I would say that by nature we're all adaptable, we're positive, that's how we're wired. So we'll grow, we'll adapt, and move on and develop. But if we spend just a little bit of time reflecting to see how we can be better, it really helps.

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You mentioned the importance of giving time to family. Is family time compromised for most professionals in today's business environment? What has been your own experience and insight on this subject?

There are two things: family and friends. Both are important. Over the last few years, spouses are also working and traveling, and to get time together is tough. But I think it's very important. Given all the pressures that we are going through, we have to find time for this. Our family members are also going through the same thing. They're also going tough times, and sometimes they want us there.

As a leader at the helm of your organization, are there any specific techniques you practice or methods you apply to stay emotionally composed and poised? The organization looks up to you, they observe what you say, they observe your body language, and they see your moods. How are you able to maintain that centeredness?

My experience over time has taught me two things. If you suppress all your emotions, if you don't recognize them, that may not be the best thing in the long run. You've got to understand the emotions you're going through. And some of them are okay to express also, because people also want to see a genuine human being. It is inconceivable for somebody to go through life and still be emotionless. Not many can do that; it needs a high level of nirvana to do that! But most people are not like

that. Where appropriate, a little bit of emotion helps. Therefore, I believe that we've got to show it.

Now, while I'm showing how I feel, there's also a role I'm playing. In addition to the emotions that I'm facing, I need to also show certain emotions needed in the moment. While I may be angry about something, I can express that anger but equally I have to immediately change to show an emotion that gives people a little more hope and optimism. I have to keep both in mind. While I express emotions, I also step back and say, "Well, I feel it. But listen, we've got to move forward for the good of the company, for the good of the group, for the good of the team. These are some things we need to do, so let's do this and see how we can move forward." You have to enable that.

Conventional management wisdom and the journeys of leaders seem to be hinting that a great deal of leadership is about how you manage your own self. How does managing yourself really fit into the overall equation of leadership?

As an organization grows, the whole thing about managing yourself becomes very important. First, in your role as a leader there are many more things that you're doing. You owe a lot to your team, you owe a lot to your people. That realization comes, and therefore you start thinking about your teams, you start thinking about others.

And you also have to manage how you are coming across. Therefore, an understanding of the role of self is very important. It's a discipline you have to build from early on, but it's also something which you can do by making space for the right moments of reflection and mentoring. More empathy, and more understanding of where you come from and what you're doing, help you to be a better leader and also help you develop a perspective of more people.

To be continued.



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the inevitability



DR ICHAK K. ADIZES shares his perspective on the notion of wanting to be happy all the time, and balancing faith, fear and acceptance.

happy. Does anyone disagree? It is even a constitutional right in America to pursue happiness. But the reality is that we are not always happy. We are often miserable and anxious.

I claim that being happy on an ongoing basis is unnatural. It is more likely that being in pain is the natural state. Here is why.

When there is change of any kind in our lives, what happens? It means there is something new happening. Now you have to decide what to do about this 'new event'. Should you do nothing or do something? And if you choose to do something, you may have several options to choose from.

Choosing what to do, including the decision to do nothing, is a process of handling uncertainty. You are not sure what will be the right decision. By definition, you do not have all the information because the new event has not been dealt with yet. We will have full information only after the fact.

You have to spend some energy which, in difficult situations, can be exhausting. To decide to make a decision in itself can be painful. I do

not mean physically painful, I mean emotionally and intellectually painful. And when you move to implement a decision, whatever decision you make, you are taking the risk that it might not work out as you anticipated it would when you originally made the decision. Taking risks is also painful.

Some pain stems from being in conflict. Not necessarily with other people. Rather, being internally in conflict. Part of you is liberal. Part of you is conservative. I suspect the liberals start from the point of faith, thus they are liberal in their choices. The conservatives start from a point of fear, thus they are conservative and the conflict one feels in one's head is this conflict between fear and faith.

Weighing the pros and cons of each decision consumes mental energy. Thus, the pain of those sleepless nights and anxiety, which in critical cases manifests as panic, that accompany our decision making.

These types of pain are inevitable because change is inevitable.

You can avoid the pain if you can avoid change, go to the Himalayas and meditate the rest of your life in a cave. Or if you become oblivious to the world you live in.

... when you move to implement a decision, whatever decision you make, you are taking the risk that it might not work out as you anticipated it would when you originally made the decision.

The more ambitious you are, the more you expect from yourself and from others, the more change you allow for in your life, the more pain you are likely to experience.

If your goal is to be happy – you can't be happy all the time, slow down. Expect less, want less, strive for an informed balance between faith and fear. Enjoy what you have and leave the rest to God.

Hmmmmm. I should re-read carefully myself what I say here ...

Just thinking.

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INTERVIEW

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else.

Charles Dickens



Well-Being Is a Skill



Best known for his groundbreaking work in the study of the brain and emotions, DR RICHARD DAVIDSON is Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Founder-Director of the Center for Healthy Minds. During a webinar hosted by AMIR H. IMANI, Dr Davidson explains how mental training to cultivate well-being can have a positive impact on happiness, creativity and productivity in the work place and at home.



Hi. It's wonderful to be here. Thank you for having me.

You are speaking about 'Well-being Is a Skill'. Even the title gives me a sense of responsibility for what goes on in my mind.

When I was reviewing your book and your lectures, it came to me that I should be aware of letting go of what is on my mind when it's time. Otherwise whatever we are holding is affecting the brain, the mind. So I personally have become much more responsible about this since I reviewed the beautiful work at your lab. Please tell us more about your findings.

Thank you so much, Amir. Let me begin by simply giving a little background. I am a neuroscientist and a psychologist by training, and I've been interested in a central question for my entire career: Why is it that certain people are more vulnerable to life's challenges and other people more resilient? And how can we nudge people along this continuum to flourish, to become more resilient? That question is one that we continue to address in different ways, as new research opportunities emerge and

as new measures become available and so on.

In the early part of my career I focused a lot on how we respond to adversity. And then in 1992 I met the Dalai Lama for the first time, and he challenged me and said, "You have been using these tools of modern neuroscience to study stress and adversity and anxiety and fear. Why can't you use those same tools to study kindness and compassion?" That was very much a wake-up call for me. I began to shift the work that we were doing toward the more virtuous qualities of the mind. And that leads us really all the way to the present.

But there were a number of major developments in modern science that helped to facilitate this work. It was not simply work that we were doing for ourselves, but rather we were building on the shoulders of many others who provided the foundation for allowing this work to go forward. I'd like to briefly describe some of those key developments that enabled this work.

One is **neuroplasticity**, which simply refers to the notion that our brains are shaped by experience. Our brains are constantly being shaped, willingly or unwillingly, which means that there are times when our brains are shaped by forces around us about which we are only dimly aware or perhaps completely unaware. And we have very little

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control over many of those forces.

So our brains are constantly being changed by the events around us, by the experiences that we have. The invitation – and it really goes back to your comment at the beginning, Amir – is that we can take more responsibility for our own brains. By cultivating virtuous qualities, by training our mind, it turns out that we can change our brains in ways that promote more enduring changes that support human flourishing. So neuroplasticity is really an important theme.

A second theme related to neuroplasticity, in the realm of genomics, is **epigenetics**. Epigenetics is the science of how genes are regulated. We are born with a sequence of base pairs that constitute our DNA, and for the most part, except for some rare circumstances, the sequence itself will not change as we go through life. What will change is the extent to which any given gene is turned on or off.

You can think of genes as having little volume controls, molecular volume controls, which determine the extent to which the gene is manufacturing the protein for which it is designed. What we find in hard-nosed research is that our experiences can actually influence the extent to which a gene is turned on or off.

Let me give an example. If a mother behaves in a very loving, nurturing way toward her baby, it induces epigenetic changes in the baby that promote positive characteristics. Those epigenetic changes last quite a long time, and in certain cases they actually persist through the entire life. So early experiences can have a very profound effect on the expression of our genes.

Several years ago we published a paper showing for the first time that in long-term meditators, who are meditating intensively for a one-day period, we can actually see changes in gene expression over the course of just that one day, over an eighthour period. This is the first time anyone has demonstrated that our gene expression is highly dynamic and can be influenced purely by mental training. This is in many ways a parallel to neuroplasticity, and it suggests that for both our brain and our genes, there is much more dynamic change than any of us previously thought. How our minds operate and the extent to which we train our minds influences both the wiring and function of our brains as well as the expression of our genes.

The third theme I would very briefly like to mention is called **Innate Basic Goodness**. What we mean by this is that we are actually born into the world with a propensity to prefer warm-hearted, cooperative, altruistic interactions rather than selfish, greedy or aggressive interactions. And this is quite remarkable. It's not to stay that the bad stuff isn't there, but, if given a choice, we will choose a warm-hearted, pro-social alternative

compared to one that is selfish and aggressive.

This has been demonstrated empirically, for example, in research with human babies who are exposed to puppets. In one scenario the puppets are behaving really badly toward one another. They are beating each other up and being selfish. In another case they are very warmhearted and cooperative. Then, when these puppets are offered to babies, the babies will reach for the warmhearted puppet, not the puppet that is mean.

This has now been demonstrated repeatedly, and it indicates that when we come into the world we come with an innate propensity to prefer warm-hearted interactions. So when we do simple meditation practices that are designed to cultivate loving kindness and compassion, we are not doing a practice that is creating these qualities out of thin air, de novo, but rather we are becoming more familiar with basic characteristics of our own mind. We are becoming more familiar with innate basic goodness. And when we recognize that every human being shares this, it can influence how we treat others in a very powerful way. It can help to decrease the kind of interpersonal conflicts that are so pervasive in our world today, and underlie so many of the major problems our civilization is facing.

So on the basis of these themes, we have formulated a framework for

Early experiences can have a very profound effect on the expression of our genes.

understanding well-being. It consists of a number of constituents, and each constituent is supported by different brain circuits. These brain circuits all show plasticity, that is, we know they can be changed by experience and training.

One of the major efforts of our center is to disseminate training widely, so that we can influence the wellbeing of the many different sectors of culture. And one of the ways we're doing it is by taking advantage of digital technology. We can use smart phones, online platforms, and help people with simple guided practices in the workplace. We can work with educators to train the different constituents of well-being in ways that we think can make a difference in major sectors of our culture. So that is a large initiative in which we are involved now. We envision creating versions for the workplace, for educators, for healthcare providers, for new parents who're having their first child, and in this way begin to influence these major groups and produce change, one sector at a time.

I am happy to address questions from the audience.

Meditation is sometimes used for dissociation or repression. What is the difference between a correct meditation practice and a one that is only escape? Is there any neurophysiological marker that distinguishes the two?

That's a very interesting and good question. A person might use a meditation practice for the purposes of repression, to bury a psychological disturbance, but I think in most cases they would not be using it in the way that would be considered correct or appropriate. They're misusing it, which is one of the reasons why it's so important to have authentic instructors who can teach this, who would avoid a mistake of that kind.

Whether there are neurophysiological markers or not has not been systematically studied, although, based on the understanding of the brain and the research that has been done, I believe you would be able to differentiate between meditation for the purpose of repression versus more appropriate meditation. There are markers that I believe would reveal differences.

(ive had a challenging

life, and my mind is used to the negative side all the time. Now I really want to be happy again and it is very difficult. Is there anything that you can help me with?

I would suggest that every day, in the morning and in the evening, you take just a few minutes and reflect on those things that are positive in your life. Even in a life that is challenged, everyone has some positive things occurring. The very fact of being born as a human being, and having the mind we are gifted with, are wonderful positive attributes to begin with. Reflecting on that capacity – being able to breathe on one's own – is something that is really beautiful and miraculous in many ways. Simply rejoice in these little things and appreciate them.

Even if you have lived a difficult life, when you reflect deeply on your daily experiences there are positive things that happen even in the middle of tragedy; acts of kindness that others express toward you, and so forth. Simply note these in your mind. You can even write them down to help remember them after you do a little period of contemplation. This can be very, very helpful in orienting the mind back toward the positive.

Yes. I should tell you, Richie, that your book and your research have made me very sensitive to this: finding

the little things in the middle of a catastrophe. I think it's about the willpower we put into finding it, and it's there in the air, the kindness.

Well, this is one of the reasons why we recommend formal practice. It's not just the experiences that occur during the formal practice, but rather it conditions the mind so that when we face adversity we remember to look at these positive things. It's a way to strengthen that muscle, if you will.

Could you please explain the neurophysiology of Samadhi, or what is called 'absorption' in deep meditation?

Samadhi, concentration and absorption are terms that refer to a particular style of meditation practice that involves focused attention. Focused attention can be helpful in stabilizing the mind and in producing equanimity and calmness. There are certain neural markers associated with this kind of mental stability that involve networks in the brain that are important for attention, particularly the connections between the prefrontal cortex and other areas of the brain involved in emotion and attention.

So in many different traditions there are practices designed to cultivate concentration or absorption, not as an

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end in itself but as a means, as a way to stabilize the mind, so that when you do other practices the attention is stable.

Why, after long-term meditation retreats, do we fall back into our default mode? Does observing the brain explain this?

Well, basically it requires quite a lot to change the brain in major ways that are enduring. It's like changing the course of a river that's been flowing in the same direction for 30, 40 or 50 years. Think of a physical analogy: if someone is grossly overweight and has not taken care of himself or herself, and goes to the gym, there's only so much change they can expect in a short period of time. This kind of change is gradual and it takes constant work.

It's very important for people who begin this journey to set realistic expectations. It means being very modest in those expectations, not expecting changes to happen overnight, and taking one small step at a time. I think if people did this they would notice change, but maybe only over decades rather than days or weeks.

That raises a question: Where does that go? If you go to a Vipassana retreat of 10 days in silence, you come back walking on clouds and you are very sensitive to everything that is going on in your body and around you. Now, something has happened in the brain that is hyper-vigilant to whatever is arising inside and outside, but after two to three weeks that subsides. Now, if you look at the brain, is there something that lights up?

Well, we don't know definitively but we certainly have some good ideas. There are changes that are transient; you can see a change, but those changes begin to dissipate. It's not that unusual. There's a lot of variation in different meditation traditions in how retreats are done, and it really means addressing the issue of reintegration. If we come back to our default mode, to baseline, pretty quickly after a week or two, that's something to reflect upon. It may be that if we can figure out how to integrate practice with everyday life, we can have changes that are more enduring.

But one thing that's really important is that one size will not fit all. I often say to people in public settings, "The very best form of meditation to do is the form of meditation that you actually do, the one that you do consistently." That's going to be different for different people. So there is no magic prescription here, but there is good evidence to suggest that regularity of practice is really important.

Of course. I love one of the findings mentioned in your book, Altered Traits.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but one of the fastest ways of changing the brain or having a lasting effect is the act of generosity and helping. That I found to be very important.

I'm happy you raised this. We think this is related to the idea I mentioned of Innate Basic Goodness. We think it is possible to produce changes more quickly when you're doing a loving kindness or compassion practice, because the nature of the mind is already imbued with Innate Basic Goodness. We're really reminding ourselves of a quality that is there from the outset.

Yes, we go back to the linguistic root of Mindfulness, which is 'remembering'.

Exactly.

I practice
Heartfulness Meditation with
Yogic Transmission, where
the life force or *Pranahuti* is
transmitted from the teacher's
heart to the practitioner to
expedite and facilitate the
meditation effect. It does
help, and experientially I feel
more and become absorbed
much faster. Transmission
is like a boost of love. Now

would this make sense to your scientific brain and observation? Is it possible to be in a deeper brainwave state, that might be the case here with *Pranahuti?*

It's an interesting and complicated question, and certainly there are ways of approaching it from a mainstream scientific perspective. We know that a lot of learning that occurs in life is Implicit Social Learning, that is, we implicitly pick up on cues that are conveyed by others and we can be deeply impacted by them without any kind of special supernatural energy or power.

I've had the honor and privilege of spending quite a bit of time around His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and I have that kind of experience with him all the time. There are conventional ways of understanding that in terms of his demeanor and the implicit social learning that occurs in response to that kind of demeanor. So I think it's entirely possible that this kind of thing occurs. I think there are 'conventional' explanations for it. Whether there is anything more than that, I don't know.

I certainly do not believe that our accounts of understanding reality in science are very complete at this point in time. I think there's a lot we don't know. So who knows! But certainly I think the phenomenon is real, it's important. I think more research needs to be done to determine whether there is something

more than what can be explained by conventional explanations.

Wonderful. We would love to have you much longer than this, Richie, but we know you are a busy man. Thank you so much for making this time.

I'm happy to have made it, and I appreciate the audience's interests in these topics. I encourage all of you to continue on this journey, and help make the world a better place by changing it one mind at a time.

To view the full webinar: https://www.facebook.com/cfmin/videos/226O2367O75436O8/







giving is receiving

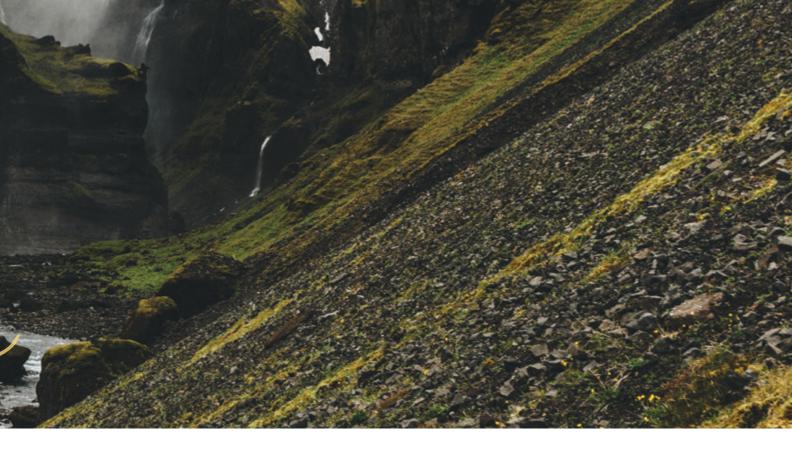
NEGIN MOTAMED

explores some fundamental principles of Nature about giving and receiving, and how we can limit ourselves by a belief system of scarcity and replace it with a new belief system of abundance.

hen we don't know how to give in order to receive, we are unaware of one of the most powerful laws of Nature. We may continue seeking and never be satisfied in our search. Many of us believe in scarcity and are in a state of poverty consciousness. We therefore stay in that state our whole lives. How can we receive what we don't believe exists? The universe seems to always approve our belief, whatever it may be. If we believe in scarcity, that remains our reality; if we trust

the universe and all its mysterious ways, we will observe in a state of wonder how things find their way to us from unknown sources. Even without knowing how, we can live in absolute abundance.

Abundance starts with a state of mind. Only when we deeply believe in it, and allow the trust that is naturally generated as a result of this belief to prevail, will we no longer be afraid of giving. We know we are connected to the treasury of the universe. Even if it seems momentarily gone, it will



come again, whatever it may be that weare giving – wealth, love, care, etc. Only with this inner condition and mental state does abundance appear as our physical reality.

It is one of the laws of Nature that there is never an empty space in Nature.

As Goethe beautifully says, "It is the nature of grace always to fill spaces that have been empty."

The wise ones know there is no emptiness in Nature. Where an empty space appears, it is immediately filled with something else. The emptiness is just momentary. And as a something new appears in the place of the old, its fresh energy and newness fills our energy and flows to other areas of our life. So we never have to be afraid of losing anything. For example, take a relationship that has not worked,

despite all the efforts we have put in to save it. Of course it is sad, but can we also ask, "What will come in its place? I am ready to embrace the new and fresh energy!"

We make our choices, and in turn they shape our reality. 'Poverty consciousness' or 'abundance consciousness' - the choice is always ours. If we choose poverty consciousness, we remain in a state of worry and we stick to what we have, whether in our bank account, in the form of other possessions, or in other resources. Worry is an indication that we believe in the absence of what we are worried about. That in itself interferes blocks the manifestation of the desired object. If we choose abundance consciousness, we accept abundance as our reality and we believe in the presence of it.

Therefore we enjoy a relaxed state of mind, as we are always spending from the treasury of the universe rather than a bank account. When we choose this state, we start giving constantly in the trust that it keeps coming. We become part of the flow of Nature. We become a conduit. Nature will know that it has found a proper conduit that allows everything to pass through.

I am not talking of wasting resources but of being an open conduit for whatever should pass through, according to the wisdom of Nature. And when we are connected to that wisdom, we do not see separation between ourselves and Nature, which is the source of everything. Neither do we see separation between ourselves and other beings. We have one hand in Nature's hand, and the other hand



in anybody's we come across. We receive from one hand and give from the other. In a state of oneness we naturally give warmth to the cold, food to the hungry, wealth to the poor, love and care to the ones in need, companionship to the ones who feel lonely. It is like feeling an itch in one hand and the other hand automatically scratches it, or when you wrap your hands around your body when you feel cold and rub your arms to give warmth.

If we think about it, nothing remains intact with the winds of change in our world. So why cling to things that result in worry, which will block abundance? Instead we can develop our preferred state of mind and feeling, and stay there in its safety.

Remaining in a state means maintaining a certain vibration, and that vibration translates into matter of the same vibration. That is how we attract certain people, events and circumstances in our lives that are in accordance with our state of mind or vibratory level. Therefore the real work is done on our inner state, changing our limiting beliefs and thought patterns based on lack and scarcity. We can change them into what serves us as well as people around us better. This may seem easier said than done, but we can break it down and make it simple.

Our beliefs are the thoughts that we have practiced for a long time. So try to think new thoughts and start practicing them long enough to turn them into beliefs.

This is even easier when we are free from the grip of old thought patterns by means of a mental cleaning process.

When we feel supported by the universe, we feel relaxed about life. We trust life and believe in its support

whenever and wherever it is needed. Then we can smile deeply, expand and dance freely in our being. We start to live in abundance, and to live all those beautiful feelings that abundance brings us, as that is the reason we seek it in the first place. That sense of freedom, choice, relaxation, ease and generosity is but the result of deeply believing in the abundance that surrounds us. And when we live it truly, the vibration that is sent to the universe will attract equivalent things, people and events.

The universe has no choice other than yielding abundance to such a person, and that is why we see carefree and generous people receiving more and more. They have learned, through their life experiences or an inner knowing, that giving is truly receiving. And ultimately when we give something, we are always giving ourselves.

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MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES

Tips to Consciously Create Them

How do you create joyous experiences in everyday life? Here MANJUNATH T shares some tips from his own experience to enrich each day with memorable experiences.

Try a small experiment:

List out the best moments of your life in a given period, e.g. the last one week, one year, or maybe your entire lifetime.

Once you have written them, ponder over them for some time.

What made these experiences memorable? Did you realize it during the experience, or did you know only when you reflected on it later? Are good memories expensive? Do they happen by chance or can we consciously create them?

If your mind was flooded with too many experiences and you had trouble shortlisting them, then probably you are a joyous person. You have the ability to create positive experiences not just for yourself but also for others. If not, the good news is that you can consciously create them.

Based on the collective wisdom of anthropologists, neuroscientists and spiritual thinkers, here are 5 tips:

Giving creates more lasting memories than receiving

Do you remember how you celebrated your birthday three years ago? You probably cut a cake, ate at a wonderful restaurant, and received expensive gifts. Do you have trouble recalling? Then your brain probably classified this as a mundane experience and flushed it out of your memory after some time.

Next time, try something different. Go to an orphanage or an old age home and personally serve them a meal with your personal involvement. This may turn out to be a very memorable birthday! And if your birthday is too far away, then don't wait, just do it. See the result of this experience.





Invest in experiences rather than things

If you have to choose between receiving a thing versus an experience, go for the latter. A Forbes article¹ quotes a 20-year study by a Cornell Professor, Dr Thomas Gilovich, about the 'Paradox of Possessions'. He found that though things outlive experiences, they do not have a profound impact on our memory. On the contrary, an experience, though fleeting, has the ability to touch your soul. After all, your possessions are yours, but not you.

Go to a new place once every few months

This suggestion comes from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Please do not misinterpret this as a suggestion to visit an exotic place every few months, as that can be a very expensive hobby! It's important to understand the essence of his teaching. Try exploring the countryside around the city where you live. This may expand your perspective in more ways than you ever imagined.





Surprise someone with a phone call

Has your hectic life erased someone from your active memory? Is there someone who crosses your mind but you have not spoken to in a long time? Surprise them with a phone call. Also, make it a point to tell them that you have been thinking of them for a while. Follow it up by meeting them. You are assured of making their day a memorable one, and also your own.

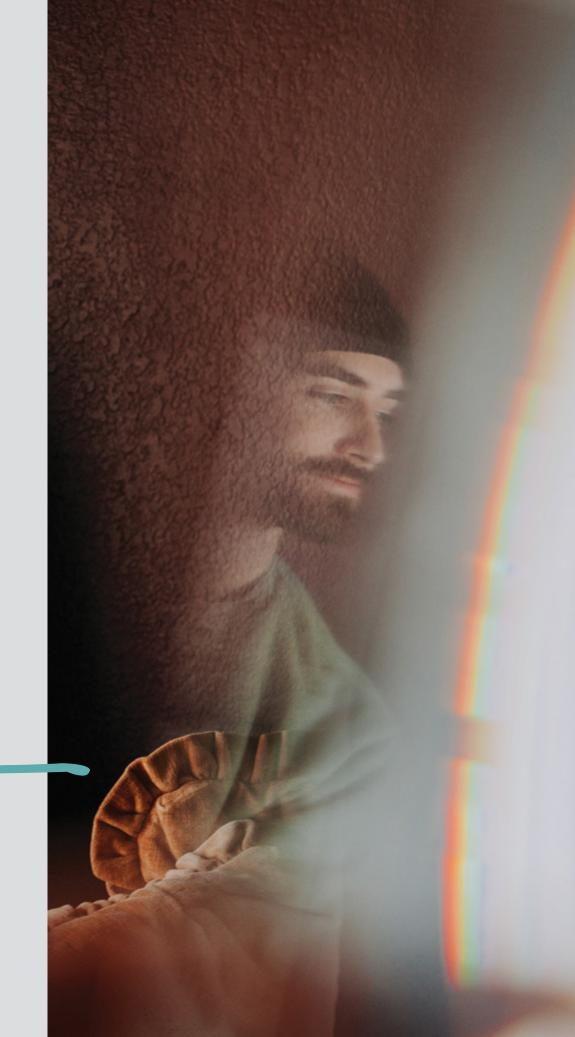
Eat your favorite meal without multitasking

After several years of penance and extreme hardships, the Buddha finally received enlightenment. His eager disciples asked him to share his teachings of life. These were his first words: "Let's eat." He and his disciples ate ripe and delicious mangoes. They didn't even talk to each other until they finished eating. All they did was to savor the mangoes with full involvement.

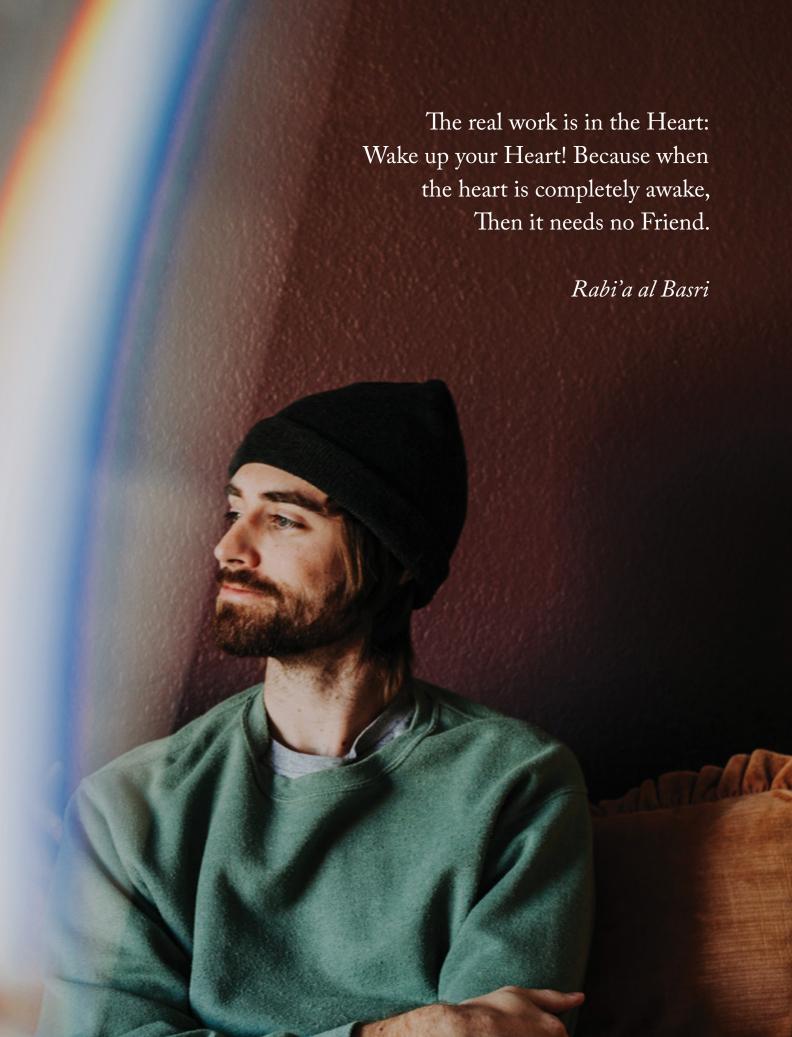
The Buddha was living in the present, which became an integral part of his teachings. Try it! But here is the catch: have your favorite meal without your phone, TV, or even chatting with those around you. Just savor the moment as if it's your last one. While this may sound ordinary, your brain thinks it's a big event and will offer its precious mind-space for a long time.



¹https://www.forbes.com/sites/travisbradberry/2016/08/09/why-you-should-spend-your-money-on-experiences-not-things/#72cee8a86520



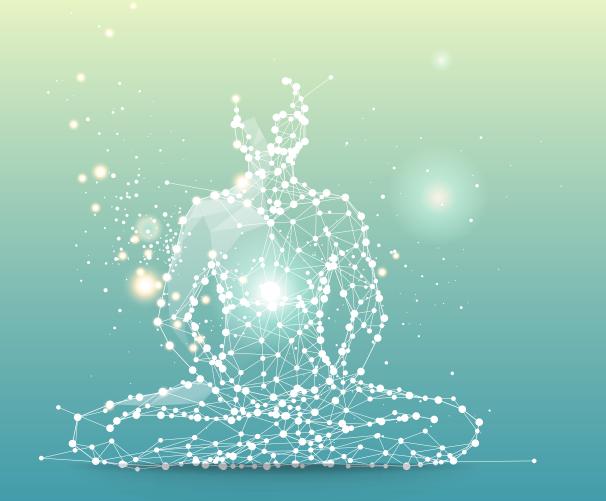
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KARMA, JNANA & BHAKTI YOGA

- part 2

From before the written Vedas, the three fundamental elements of yogic practice have been described as Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. In part 1, DAAJI enlightened us on how these three elements arose, and went into detail on karma and jnana. Here he focuses on bhakti and the interplay of all three in our path of Yoga.



he heart is the midpoint of our whole system, and its attention can be diverted towards any aspect of worldly life and also towards spiritual life. So the heart's energy can be expressed in action, in knowledge, and also in the subtlest aspects of existence. In a balanced person, the heart gives importance to all three elements, and our higher purpose is very much in focus. For this higher purpose, and even to bring love and enthusiasm into daily life we need bhakti, which is our lifeline for the upward journey.

BHAKTI

What is bhakti? If we could ask Mirabai, she would probably say, "I don't know anything about bhakti." If we could ask Kabir Saheb, or Teresa d'Avila or Rabi'a, I don't think their answers would impress us either. Yet all these saintly people are the personification of bhakti for us.

Most people understand bhakti as devotion. But actually it is much more. Remember the state before creation, when everything was resting in a state of absolute oneness? What qualities lead us towards that state? It is a combination of so many things: enthusiasm, will, interest, faith, courage, devotion, attachment, respect, and most of all love. Especially love for the universal principle we call God. Bhakti is something we cherish

so deeply inside our heart that the Ultimate becomes everything for us.

The result of adding bhakti to any action or thought is that it is enlivened. Bhakti is the spark in action and the spark in thinking. The word 'enthusiasm' comes from the Greek *theos*, and literally means 'to put God into'; that is bhakti.

More than understanding bhakti, we need to experience it. If meditating, praying, going to church, the temple or the mosque resulted in bhakti, then so many of us would develop it, but that is not the case. Why? Because with every ritual or prayer, we have a hidden agenda: I want peace of mind; I want to be successful; I want life's miseries to go away; I crave a better life after death, to spend in a magnificent paradise. Bhakti is that state where we love for the sake of love. The moment we put a temporary worldly or other-worldly goal in front of us it fails.

When we meditate, we gradually develop various stages of bhakti as we progress. Just as enlightenment is an unfolding work in progress, so is bhakti. We develop states of spiritual consciousness, and over time the inner sky of our consciousness changes and becomes more and more beautiful as we rise higher and higher. When we are on top of a hill, we are able to view the entire surroundings for 360 degrees, whereas when we

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When we meditate and arrive at a particular spiritual state and it becomes more and more beautiful, what happens? A time comes when we start appreciating this ever-changing canvas, the horizon, the sky of consciousness that goes on changing.

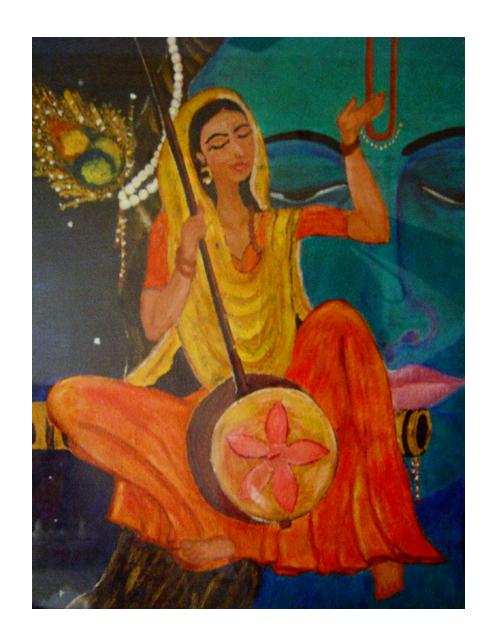
are in the valley we have a limited view of things. Even on top of the mountain, if four of us are there we may not all be looking in the same direction. One person stands facing the East, another facing the West etc. All of us will have a different vision by which we have reached the top. So realized souls, though they have reached the top, see different things because the vision is infinite. A highly-evolved consciousness is able to see things based on the direction faced from the top. What one person says is correct because that is what they see from the top; what I say is also correct based on what I am seeing from the top. Nobody is wrong. Mirabai would laugh and say, "I don't know anything about bhakti," but her life is bhakti personified, love personified, because she is absolutely ignorant about the whole thing. The moment we are aware of our love for the beloved, the moment we become conscious of it, it loses its charm.

When we meditate and arrive at a particular spiritual state and it becomes more and more beautiful, what happens? A time comes when we start appreciating this ever-changing canvas, the horizon, the sky of consciousness that goes on changing. First, we appreciate the practice that has brought this experience forward into our lives – something that otherwise would have come many years later. We have accelerated the pace of our evolution of consciousness thanks to meditation.

A time comes when we don't feel like missing it at any cost. Then we start wondering, "Who is it behind the practice? Who is helping me arrive at such beautiful experiences?" Then we realize that the practice has other elements to it: there is Transmission; there is the Guide; and we slowly fall in love with the giver, with the Source, with the Lord.

So this attachment or affiliation develops naturally, out of personal experience, and is translated slowly into a state of bhakti. And just as we have a spectrum of light, a spectrum of consciousness, so also there is a spectrum of bhakti. In the beginning we may like to dance, perhaps like Mira. She was always ecstatic, singing the praises of the Lord with an instrument in her hand. But then a day also comes when this music becomes internalized. The Lord is no longer spoken about, is no longer praised but entertained in the heart so much that He engulfs us in some way. There is a kind of osmosis established between our little self and His great Self and we become one. That is the state of bhakti. But do we need to go mad in love? How many Miras have there been in this world? What price did she pay? She chose to leave her family and her friends. We have a beautiful path where a similar state develops without the need for that; but only if we become such a vessel who is willing to experiment. Experimentation will lead us to the right result. We need to experiment in order to see if we develop bhakti while leading a normal family life. That means practicing meditation and the other methods that are given. That is the karma part of it.

In the beginning the practice is also a burden. But it becomes easier once we meditate for a few days and have various experiences. Then we feel that it is worth making it a part of our life. We arrive at some sort of knowledge. But karma alone is not enough, and knowledge alone is not enough, because karma without bhakti and jnana without bhakti are impotent. It is like serving your husband all your life but without love. What becomes of your actions, your service? Service without love is of no use; karma without love is of no use.



So this state of akarma can be a bhakti state, where we love God but don't know that we love Him. The idea of love disappears. Our approach to God needs to become like that, where the heart is burning with restlessness waiting for the beloved.

And knowledge? You may know so much. Let us say that you can recite the entire Gita. That is wonderful and a sacred beginning; but should you end there? Should you become complacent: "Oh, I know the whole Gita." That is the danger of knowledge.

Knowledge can be dangerous if there is no action. Action without love is also not productive. Lord Krishna emphasizes this in the Gita. He classifies actions into three categories: karma, vikarma and akarma. When you add the first two, karma and vikarma, they become akarma. Here is a mundane example: a mother wakes in the middle of night because her baby is crying. She feeds the baby and goes back to bed. Suppose a few days later she is not well, the baby cries, and she wakes her husband: "Honey, please, the baby is crying, warm up the milk and feed the baby." He will get up, he will do it, but he will keep it in his memory, "I did this for you when you were not well." He will remind everyone else also.

So what happens to such actions? A mother acts for the sake of the baby, out of love, to the extent that she is not even aware of what she has done, but the great husband remembers it all his life (I am not attacking anyone!). His action is done without the kind of love the mother has, so it will not become vikarma. When karma is performed with love, it becomes vikarma. But a person who keeps on saying, "I did this, I did this out of love," is not acting from love – people with love will never do this. But a time comes when the idea of love disappears from the equation altogether, although it is very much present behind the scenes. Then it becomes akarma, when you neither remember the action nor the love behind it.

When you start driving for the first time in life, you struggle with where to put the key, how to open the door, how to move the gears, where the light is, where the wiper is, and which side to turn. You are very careful, with heightened awareness and anxiety about driving the car. Then a time comes when you know how to drive properly and you start enjoying it, like a child who rides his cycle with his friends, singing songs. He

is not even aware of riding the bicycle, and he loves it. Love makes us forget action. A stage comes where it becomes absolutely automatic. That is akarma – where you have no idea and there are no impressions of either karma or love.

So this state of akarma can be a bhakti state, where we love God but don't know that we love Him. The idea of love disappears. Our approach to God needs to become like that, where the heart is burning with restlessness waiting for the beloved. Either we burn like wet wood, giving out a lot of smoke, or we burn like dry wood, which burns easily with very little smoke and sparks, because it does not have the water element in it, or we burn like electricity without any smoke, emotions and the need for display. It is our choice whether we approach the Lord with a lot of smoke, flourish and bravado, or we want to be anonymous, quiet, insignificant, and humble, quietly loving His creation. For loving the Lord is not enough if we forget His creation.

Love makes us forget action. A stage comes where it becomes absolutely automatic.
That is akarma – where you have no idea and there are no impressions of either karma or love.

It is our choice whether we approach the Lord with a lot of smoke, flourish and bravado, or we want to be anonymous, quiet, insignificant, and humble, quietly loving His creation. For loving the Lord is not enough if we forget His creation.

INTEGRATING KARMA, JNANA AND BHAKTI

Let's go back to the beginning of the universe when that first stir found an opportunity for infinite expansion. There was movement (karma) and thinking (jnana), and before either of these there was the original connection of everything with the Source (bhakti). Karma, jnana and bhakti have been there since the very beginning of the universe, as fundamental elements of life, and together they dance and weave our existence through the fabric of time.

How to be wise and selective in what actions, knowledge and devotional practices you choose? Ask yourself:

Karma yoga: what actions and services will refine me? What karmas connect me to the Source?

Jnana yoga: what sort of knowledge elevates my consciousness? Which jnana connects me to the Source?

Bhakti yoga: to whom or what am I devoted? What form of bhakti connects me to the Source?

In fact, these three are inseparable, and dependent on each other, and they continue to represent the body, mind and soul of all existence. When they are integrated into oneness within us, then we are able to reach that state of union we know as Yoga.



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

THE RELIGION OF LOVE

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

here is a Persian poem that tells how a lover came to the door of his beloved, and knocked. She asked, "Who art thou?" and he replied "I am so and so, thy beloved!" and she answered only, "Go! I know none such!" But when she had asked for the fourth time, he said "I am thyself, O my beloved, therefore open thou to me!" and the door was opened.

days, she loves him and thinks him most beautiful. The lover sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt. We do not commonly realize what happens. The brow of Egypt is merely a suggestion: the man sees Helen. His ideal is thrown upon the suggestion and covers it, as the oyster makes sand into a pearl. God is this ideal, through which man may see all.

A great saint said, using the language of a girl, describing love. "Four eyes met. There were changes in two souls. And now I cannot tell whether he is a man, and I a woman, or he a woman and I a man. This only I remember, two souls were. Love came, and there was one."

In the highest love, union is only of the spirit. All love of another kind is quickly evanescent. Only the spiritual lasts, and this grows.

Love sees the Ideal. This is the third angle of the triangle. God has been cause, Creator, Father. Love is the culmination. The mother regrets that her child is humpbacked, but when she has nursed him for a few



Hence we come to love Love itself. This love cannot be expressed. No words can utter it. We are dumb about it.

The senses become very much heightened in love. Human love, we must remember, is mixed up with attributes. It is dependent, too, on the other's attitude. Indian languages have words to describe this interdependence of love. The lowest love is selfish: it consists in

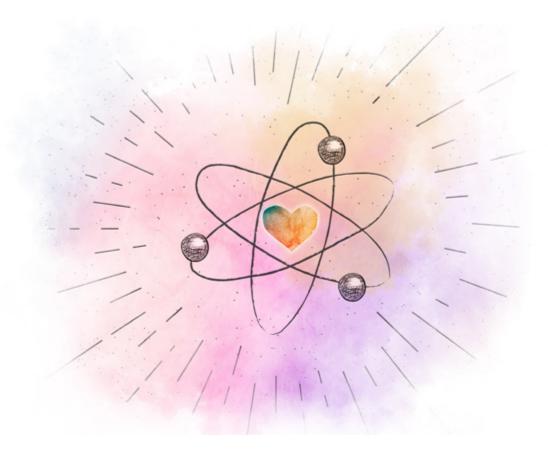
the pleasure of being loved. We say in India, 'one gives the cheek the other kisses.' Above this is mutual love. But this also ceases mutually. True love is all giving. We don't even want to see the other, or to do anything

Believe first in yourself, then in God.

A handful of strong men will move the world.

We need a heart to feel; a brain to conceive;

and a strong arm to do the work.



to express our feeling. It is enough to give. It is almost impossible to love a human being like this, but it is possible so to love God. ...

The three angles of the triangle are: Love begs not. Love knows no fear. Love is always of the ideal.

"Who would be able to live one second, Who would be able to breathe one moment, If the Loving one had not filled this universe?"

Most of us will find that we were born for service. We must leave the results to God. If failure comes, there need be no sorrow. The work was done only for God.

In women, the mother-nature is much developed. They worship God as the child. They ask nothing, and will do anything. ...

Deepen your own power of thought and love. Bring your own lotus to blossom: the bees will come of themselves. Believe first in yourself, then in God. A handful of strong men will move the world. We need a heart to feel; a brain to conceive; and a strong *arm* to do the work. Buddha gave himself for the animals. Make yourself a fit agent to work. But it is God who works, not you. One man contains the whole universe. One particle of matter has all the energy of the Universe at its back. In a conflict between the heart and the brain follow your heart.

Notes of a lecture delivered in London on November 16, 1895, from *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 8.

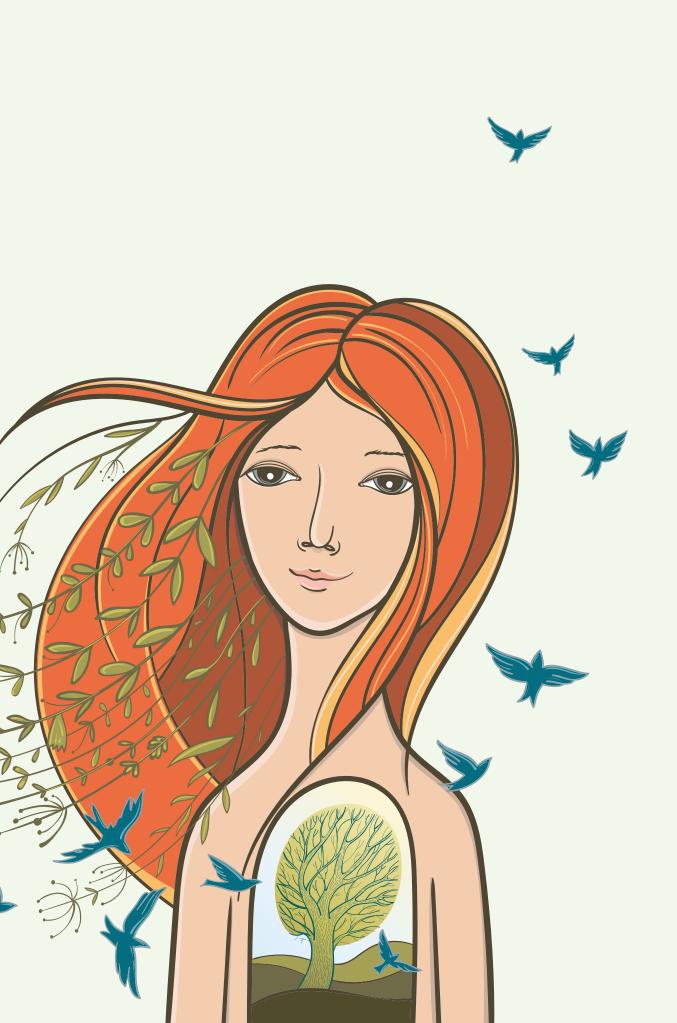
taste of life



Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.

Rachel Carson







If this story was an isolated one, it could be dismissed as an amazing coincidence, or as fabrication, but stories of wise ones bringing or ending rain, or influencing other natural phenomena, appear throughout history, throughout the world. They are still reported in our own time. The pervasiveness of these stories tells me that they describe something that is possible. They tell me humans experience the ancient teaching: as within, so without.

A woman I respect, a teacher and practitioner of Chinese Medicine and Sound Therapy, speaks of the crisis of our world's water systems.

"When you treat a client," she counsels a group of us, "treat the water channels in the body; create flow and balance. This is a way to improve the health of the Earth's water systems."

This is a way to apply the wisdom of connectedness.

Such ancient wisdom has in general been long forgotten, and its teachings abandoned, or dismissed as childish or magic, scoffed at, or not thought about at all. But it does not change the fundamental principle that we are one with this Earth.

How can the enormity of this forgotten condition be known again? It is a question many of us ask in one form or another:

How can we find our way back to harmony and balance? What are the wise actions we need to make in order to restore ourselves in right relationship? How can we know what actions are wise?

At a recent conference I listened to biologist Kevin van Tighem, retired superintendent of Banff National Park and award-winning author.

"When we talk about restoration," he said, "it has to include restoration of ourselves." He described how western science has broken things into many disciplines,

To receive knowledge I need to learn how to truly listen. Then I can listen to the land, to hear what the land knows and what it is offering in guidance as a way to restore balance.





many specialized bits of knowledge, looking at the world through particular windows. But we need to learn to think of the whole. "We need to break down the barriers to put us back together."

In the garden, I'm one of those people who talk to the plants, something so many gardeners understand. Do the plants understand? Do plants have the capacity to care and feel? Do they know I'm talking to them? And perhaps more importantly, do I know when they talk to me?

"Where's the proof that plants communicate?" my scientist friends ask, meaning the proof of the classic scientific method, where the results of an experiment can be repeated in the laboratory by anyone who follows the steps outlined in the experiment.

There are other factors of influence than the measurable ones required in the scientific method. These subtle conditions cannot be controlled and repeated in the way I can measure exact temperature or volume of water, yet they influence what happens. I cannot give the proof that is required, but I am not willing to suspend my own observation and experience because it does not meet criteria that are incomplete and limited. More importantly, I am not willing to dismiss the rich history of indigenous peoples worldwide that honors plants as conscious beings capable of communication. When asked how a particular plant cure was discovered, indigenous sages will respond, "The plant told me." Other stories tell of asking a plant for permission to use it in healing ceremony or service and actually listening for a response and acting accordingly.

If the consciousness of plants is dismissed, how can we find our way back to experiencing our connectedness – the potential for being able to communicate and learn from other beings who share this Earth? How can we restore our relationship?

In the early days of the Findhorn community in Scotland, it was listening to plants and following their guidance that gave extraordinary growing accomplishments, because the plants themselves communicated what they needed.

Professor Emeritus and Blackfoot scholar at the University of Lethbridge, Leroy Little Bear, said recently, "I want to give you the big picture – something we don't often think of. We're in the cosmos, a very small speck in the cosmos. When you compare our planet, sun, solar system with the rest of the universe, there's nothing special. We're very typical. The cosmos is made up of energy forces in constant flux. On this Earth, there just happens to be the right combination of these fluxes to bring us into existence. This is what the elders are talking about: our existence is brought about by the totality of our relationships. If you take something out, it affects the whole – it changes things."

Leroy relates a story told by an Aboriginal student in his class. The boy told of a small tribe in West Australia that had consciously decided not to reproduce, because industry had so changed their environment that they couldn't be who they were anymore.

"I hope we don't reach that point," Leroy added.

There are cosmic and Earth events that disrupt, change, and damage the environment. The geologic and oral history is replete with examples. These are huge processes beyond the control, management or regulation of human will and thinking. But other influences causing major disruption are coming from human behavior. We may not have intended this destructive impact when we made the choices we made. We intended a positive outcome. But now we see that our actions and our creations have destabilized and harmed our relationships in our world. Considerable disruption has occurred. How is this to be redressed? This is a dimension of reconciliation.

Another Blackfoot knowledge keeper, William Singer, who resides on the Kainai or Blood Reserve in southern

Alberta, expresses concern over what he observes happening on the land: the disappearance of many varieties of plants and animals. In his youth, William was trained as a herbalist by his father, using the natural plants of his surroundings.

"I went again to the land to get some answers. There's no going back to the way it was before these changes happened. We have to adapt. We have to find the ways to adapt. We are the answers."

Knowing that our human species has caused harm when it wasn't intended, knowing that we cannot go back, how do we decide what to do next, to find what is right action? The Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path as a means to overcome the suffering of existence. He identified right action as one of the paths. How is right action discerned? How do I trust choices for the future, seeing how much error has occurred from past action?



Can I learn to listen to what other creatures have to say? Can I adapt according to the messages they give? I am making efforts to learn how to do this, and the garden is a good place to practice.

This takes me back to the garden, to the plants and animals and land. It takes me within. I recognize that I cannot think my way to right action. Thinking, delineating, planning and dissecting – to name just a few of the many qualities of our rational mind – are amazing human tools of cognition, but this rational thinking is also a limited tool for gaining knowledge and understanding. More unfortunately, it has taken over the show and is now generally accepted as the only reliable way.

Einstein commented, "We can't solve our problems by using the same kind of thinking that created them." We need another way to use our minds, another way to perceive and understand right action, a way that will restore harmony, balance and right relationship.

I know that I don't know. But I also know there are ways to receive knowledge. To receive knowledge I need to learn how to truly listen. Then I can listen to the land, to hear what the land knows and what it is offering in guidance as a way to restore balance.

Barbara McClintock, who won a Nobel Prize for her investigation into the genetic behavior of corn, said that she never did anything that the corn did not instruct her to do. She knew how to listen to the corn she was studying.

In the garden, I am learning to listen. In meditation, I am learning to listen.

I aspire to this kind of listening. It's different than thinking, different than trying to figure something out with my rational mind, which as a species we've taken to the limit.

There's no going back, but our future as a species is dependent on how we move forward, as it is for many of the creatures who share our home, planet Earth. Can I learn to listen to what other creatures have to say? Can I adapt according to the messages they give? I am making efforts to learn how to do this, and the garden is a good place to practice.









BRIAN JONES is a Member of the Royal Society of Marine Artists, who exhibits in their annual exhibition at the Mall Galleries in London. His work has been published by Yachting Heritage in their limited edition books, and he has completed commissions for the Royal Navy and other influential private collectors in the UK, USA, Europe and the Middle East.







Born on the Kent coast in 1945, ships and sea have always been a great influence in my life. After completing my formal education I was keen to go to art school, however in the late 1950s boys were encouraged to 'go out and get a proper job'. This I did.

I embarked on a successful career as a chef, which led to various college teaching jobs and finally I became head of a catering school. In the 1980s I began to paint seriously again, selling to local galleries and private collectors. In the late '90s I wanted to devote all my time to painting and took early retirement moving to Looe in south-east Cornwall. I now have my own studio and enjoy the influence of the Cornish coast and all its maritime connections.

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I am most influenced by the grace and beauty of the classic yachts of the 1920s and 1930s and current regattas around the world. I have a deep interest in ships of Nelson's Navy and the river Thames in its heyday. In all my work I try to convey an atmosphere of what it was like at the time, with as much accuracy and movement as possible. I have been influenced by some of the great marine artists both past and present including W.L. Wyllie, Norman Wilkinson and Montague Dawson, and my favorite artists are Terrick Williams and Edward Seago.

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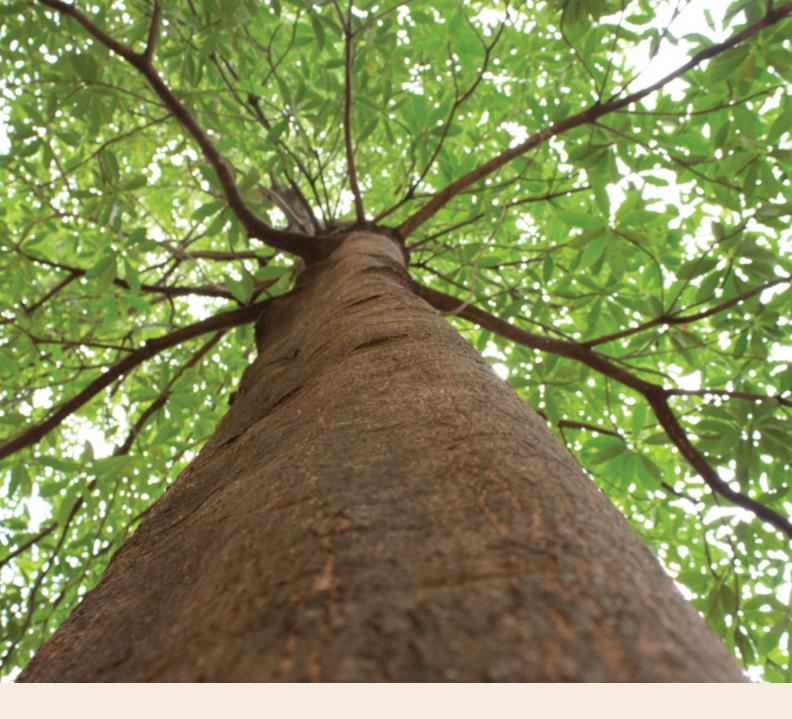
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RE-ESTABLISHING THE CONNECTION

RAJEEV JAISWAL enjoys being in nature. Here he muses on our interconnectedness.

The human being resembles a tree; its root is a covenant with God. —Rumi

It was another beautiful day. I was roaming around in the serene environment of Kanha Shanti Vanam when my eyes stumbled upon a tree dancing in the breeze. I was mesmerized watching it. I looked at nearby trees and found that they were also dancing in their own rhythm. All the trees seemed to be very happy, which made me happy.

I recalled the days when I was here a few months back, in the month of April, when the sunrays were penetrating the skin. The trees were dry and in silence. At that time I had looked down to the roots of every tree and found that they were standing firm – connected to the same source as all the other trees, witnessing each moment as it appeared before them, knowing no season is going to last forever; not summer, not winter, not spring. Roots are wise; they stand firm irrespective of the season and witness everything, whereas leaves and branches react to every season they experience.

I looked at my life here on Earth: it resembles the tree.

Imagine the tree representing human life:

The roots represent the soul, eternally connected to the source.

Different branches represent our different relationships with fellow human beings.

The leaves represent our senses and sense of perception.

Different seasons represent the different stages of human life, such as childhood, youth and old age.

Our physical bodies don't remain young forever, yet we cling to youthfulness, forgetting that it is a phase of life that will change. In contrast, the soul is constant, immortal, eternal, indestructible and beyond duality. It is but a witness, always connected to the source.

We suffer because we forget our roots and get busy satisfying the senses and managing relationships. Once we go back to our roots and re-vitalize the connection, we live in peace witnessing each moment as it appears in front of us.

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Heartfulness Yogasanas

PAWANAMUKTASANA



STAGE I

Sit straight with legs stretched out, palms by the side of the thighs.

Keep the spine erect.

Fold the legs, place them closer to the chest with hands interlocked around the knees.

Breathe in and breathe out. Bend the neck forward and try to place the forehead on the knees.

Balance on the lower back.

Close the eyes, hold and stay with gentle, long and deep breaths - in and out six times.

STAGE II

Slowly rock the body forward and backward a few times, without touching the feet on the ground. Feel the nice massage on the spine and back.

Do the practice with normal breath.

STAGE III

Continue to rock the body forward, and feel the nice massage on the spine while rocking the body.

Do the practie with normal breath.

STAGE IV

Continue to rock the body. Come on the feet while rocking the body forward. Extend the legs straight up to the vertical level, while rocking the body backward.

Do the practice with normal breath.

STAGE V

Continue to rock the body. Come on the feet while rocking the body forward. When rocking backward, take the legs straight back towards the head, and touch the feet on the floor behind. Feel the nice massage on the spine, while rocking the body backward.

Do the practice with normal breath, a few times.

Stop the practice and relax in Shavasana.

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Helpful to reduce gastritis, acidity, arthritis pain, and heart problems. Strengthens back muscles and cures back pain.

Beneficial for reproductive organs and for menstrual disorders.



- Sit comfortably and close your eyes very softly and very gently.
- Let's begin with the toes. Wiggle your toes. Now feel them relax.
- Relax your ankles and feet. Feel energy move up from the Earth... through your feet up to your knees relaxing the legs.
- Relax your thighs. The energy moves up your legs ... relaxing them.
- Now, deeply relax your hips ... stomach ... and waist.
- Relax your back. From the top to the bottom the entire back is relaxed.
- Relax your chest ... and shoulders. Feel your shoulders simply melting away.
- Relax your upper arms. Relax each muscle in your forearms ... your hands ... right up to your fingertips.
- Relax your neck muscles. Move your awareness up to your face. Relax your jaw ... mouth ... nose ... eyes and eyelids ... earlobes ... facial muscles ... forehead ... all the way to the top of your head.
- Feel how your whole body is now completely relaxed.
 Scan from top to toe if any part of the body needs your attention, revisit that organ and ensure that it is relaxed.
- Move your attention to your heart. Rest there for a little while. Feel immersed in the love and light in your heart.
- Remain still and quiet, and slowly become absorbed in yourself.
- Remain absorbed for as long as you want, until you feel ready to come out.



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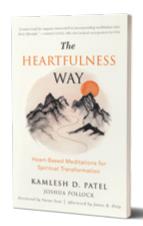


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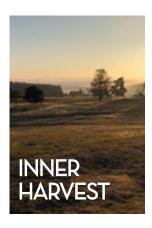
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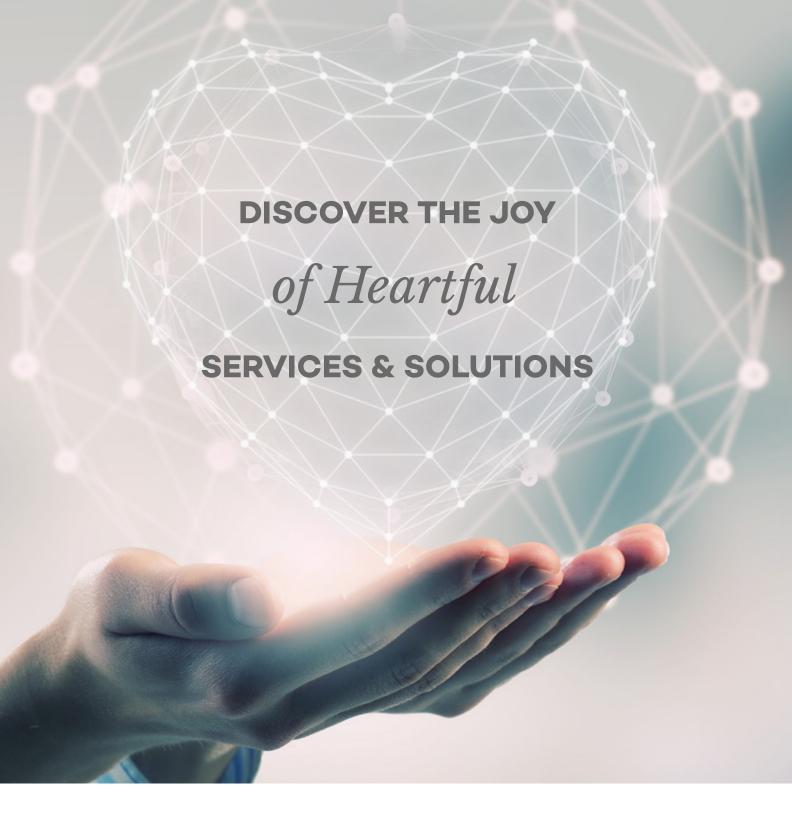
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