

Heartfulness

Self | Work | Relationships | Inspiration | Vitality | Nature | Children

MATTER, ENERGY AND ABSOLUTE

Daaji: the science of the universe

AWE AND COMPASSION

*Dacher Keltner:
the slow-moving shift*

THE ENERGY CHALLENGE

*Sanjeev Sharma:
using energy wisely*

LIVING WITH THE NEW CHILDREN

*Terran Daily:
a soothing environment*

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The Science of Stillness



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Heartfulness

Through meditation, transformation

heartfulness.org/masterclass

The Equinox

AND OTHER NATURAL CYCLES

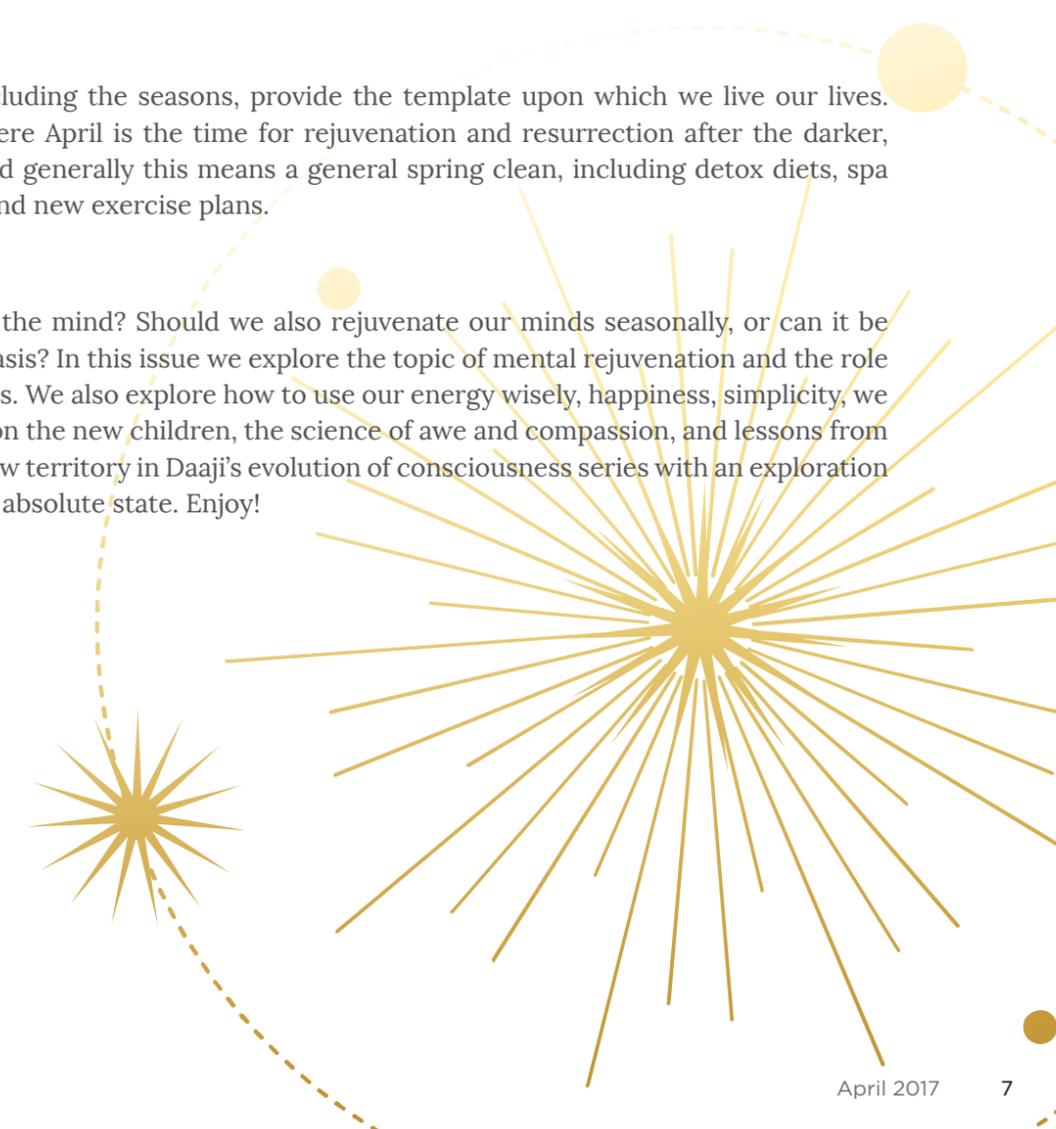
Whether it is now spring or autumn where you live, it is a time of change. The equinox has not long passed, that time when day and night are of almost equal duration all over the planet, when the sun crosses the celestial equator. When everything stands upon the point of balance. And then the new cycle starts in a different direction.

Traditionally, it has been an important time spiritually in all cultures. For example, the spring equinox was the time when the Egyptians celebrated the resurrection of their god Osiris, the Thracians celebrated the resurrection of the god Orpheus, the Greeks celebrated the resurrection of the god Dionysus, and the Maya celebrated the resurrection of the maize god Hun Hunahpu. Jesus the Christ was also crucified and resurrected around the time of the equinox. The temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia aligns to the spring equinox, as does the Great Sphinx of Giza in Egypt.

The cycles of Nature, including the seasons, provide the template upon which we live our lives. In the northern hemisphere April is the time for rejuvenation and resurrection after the darker, colder winter months, and generally this means a general spring clean, including detox diets, spa treatments, herbal teas, and new exercise plans.

What about rejuvenating the mind? Should we also rejuvenate our minds seasonally, or can it be done on a more regular basis? In this issue we explore the topic of mental rejuvenation and the role of yogic cleaning to do this. We also explore how to use our energy wisely, happiness, simplicity, we continue with our series on the new children, the science of awe and compassion, and lessons from the garden, and go into new territory in Daaji's evolution of consciousness series with an exploration of matter, energy and the absolute state. Enjoy!

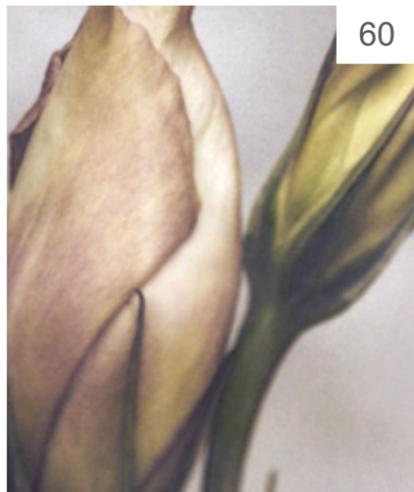
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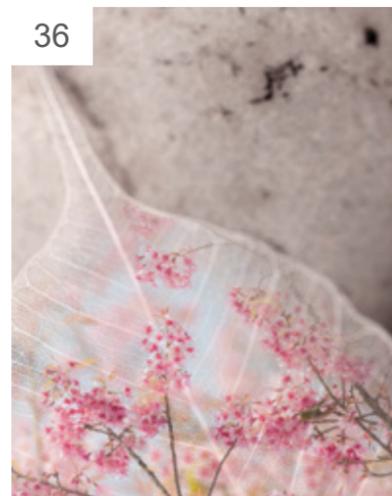
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Embracing the many roles of a modern-day spiritual Guide, you will find Kamlesh Patel equally at home meditating with a group of followers in the sublime stillness of a Himalayan ashram, teaching thousands of people to meditate at an international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



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

As the world teacher of Heartfulness and the fourth spiritual Guide in the Sahaj Marg system of Raja Yoga, Daaji oversees Heartfulness centers and ashrams in over 130 countries, and guides the 8,000+ certified trainers who are permitted to impart Yogic Transmission under his care.

Emma Ivaturi



Emma has been thrilled to be a part of the editorial and design teams for the Heartfulness Magazine since its inception. She finds great joy in teaching meditation as a Heartfulness trainer. She has also recently been sharing Heartfulness with hundreds of school children in her area and is looking forward to being a new mom this summer.

Dacher Keltner



Dacher is a professor in UC Berkeley's Psychology Department and faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center. His research focuses on the biological and evolutionary origins of compassion, awe, love, beauty, and power, social class and inequality. He is the author of the best-selling *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life*, *The Compassionate Instinct*, and most recently *The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence*. He has written for *The New York Times*, *The London Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *SLATE*, and *Utne Reader*, and received numerous national prizes and grants for his research.

He was a consultant on Pixar's film *Inside Out*, has worked with Facebook to make the site more kind, and on projects at Google on altruism and emotion. He collaborates with the Sierra Club to help veterans and inner city kids outdoors. He is married with two teenage daughters, and loves camping, backpacking, Mexican food, Iggy Pop, African Music, Art Museums, Yoga and friends.

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Sanjeev is a consultant psychiatrist who lives in Perth, Australia. He has integrated a holistic approach to his medical practice in the last few years, and is a passionate advocate of combining meditation and nutritional medicine with more traditional approaches to psychiatry. He has been a Heartfulness practitioner for twenty years.

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Heartfulness

Through meditation, rejuvenation

Cleaning to Rejuvenate Yourself

Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and feel relaxed.

Have the intention that all complexities and impurities you have accumulated during the day are leaving your entire system. They are going out your back, from the top of your head to your tailbone. Imagine that they are leaving your system as smoke.

Remain alert during the entire process, like a witness to the clouds passing in the sky. Gently accelerate this process with confidence and determination, applying your will as needed. If your attention drifts and other thoughts come to mind, gently bring your focus back to the cleaning.

As the impressions leave from your back you will start to feel light in your heart.

Continue this process for twenty minutes. ...

You will feel lightness, so now connect with the Source. Feel the current descending from the Source and entering your system from the front. It is flowing throughout your system, carrying away any remaining complexities and impurities.

You have now returned to a simpler, purer and more balanced state. Every cell of your body is emanating simplicity, lightness and purity.



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CALL FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

The mission of the Heartfulness Institute's research department is to support and facilitate a scientific approach toward contemplative practices and advance our understanding of meditation and consciousness.

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

OBJECTIVE OF THE HEARTFULNESS RESEARCH GRANTS

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

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

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

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must hold a PhD, MD or equivalent degree and have an official affiliation with a college, university, institute, medical school or other research facility.

APPLICATIONS

The application should include:

- Biosketches/CVs of the principal investigator and collaborators,
- Research project description, including specific aims and hypotheses to be tested, experimental design, method of analysis of the data, and the significance and potential impact of the study, Preliminary data may be included if available, including data related to other meditation practices. [< 3 pages]
- Resources available, budget and justification. [1 page]

REVIEW PROCESS

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

WHAT IS HEARTFULNESS?

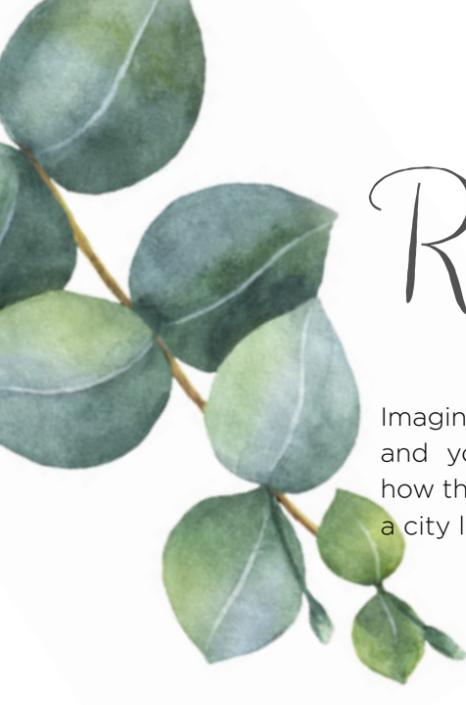
It is a modern-day system of Raja Yoga, using meditation to regulate and balance the mind. Heartfulness is a heart-based meditation practice. To learn more, please visit www.heartfulness.org.

The basic practices are Heartfulness relaxation, meditation, cleaning and connection with the Source. Weekly individual and group meditation sessions with a trainer (either in person or via the LetsMeditate App) are recommended in order to bring about effective results.

Heartfulness Institute is a non-profit organization founded in 2016 in USA, India, France and Denmark. They are the sister organizations of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM), founded in 1945, and Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation, together present in 130 countries, with 8,000+ certified trainers, serving more than a million meditators.

SRCM is formally associated as a non-governmental organization with the United Nations Department of Public Information and works globally to advance the goals of peace, harmony and sustainability through yoga and meditation.

Please direct all enquiries to research@heartfulness.org.



Rejuvenation

Imagine being in a constant state of mental rejuvenation and youthful lightness. ELIZABETH DENLEY describes how this is easily done in the midst of the daily activities of a city lifestyle.

What does it mean – to rejuvenate? The word itself means to ‘again become young’. To turn back the clock, to revitalize, regenerate, regain the vitality we once had. It means that we have lost something that we want to regain.

Generally we want to rejuvenate our health and well-being, whether it be physical or mental. This is almost an epidemic in today’s developed world, because these days many of us have succumbed to chronic 21st century lifestyle dis-eases.

They include diabetes, coronary artery disease, adrenal burnout, irritable bowel syndrome, thyroid imbalances, autoimmune diseases like celiac disease and rheumatoid arthritis, etc. The equivalent mental conditions include various forms of depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress, chronic stress, anxiety and anger disorders.

In children, others labels are given, such as ADHD and autism, as well as many types of learning disabilities, because children’s imbalances are largely seen through the lens of how well they function at school.

These are different manifestations of energy blockages or imbalances in the human organism. If we are not in tune with natural cycles, then we will create imbalances in our utilization of energy, leading to dis-ease. Natural cycles occur on many scales – for example, the seasons, daily cycles, breathing cycles, and the cycles that happen within microseconds in our cells, just to name a few. In all of these, energy is moving in our bodies in a cyclical way, and our finely tuned and very sensitive hormones try to adjust our bodies to the rhythms of life.

In earlier times, rejuvenation was something that happened according to these cycles. For example, rejuvenation was done seasonally, often during the spring, after the heavy winter months had taken their toll on the body. The wise women of all cultures knew which spring herbs, vegetables and fruits would give a boost to the body’s immune system and be a tonic for the blood. They would cook and prepare tonics for their families accordingly. For example, still today Europeans make nettle soup in the spring to rejuvenate their systems. In India, Ayurveda uses Ashwaganda root as a common tonic, and asparagus root is used in Traditional Chinese Medicine. All cultures have such rejuvenating tonics that revive and refresh the human physiology.

And what about the mind? How do we rejuvenate our mental well-being? And what is mental rejuvenation? Given the meaning of the word, it is the state we have when the mind has returned to its youthful, innocent, purified state – when the slate is wiped clean and there is lightness. It is when all the heaviness, the complexities and impurities are removed.

How do we rejuvenate the mind? The easiest way I know is to practice some form of mental cleaning every evening, after the day’s activities. The best one I have discovered is the yogic cleaning of Heartfulness, which is simple, practical, and removes the impressions that form in the heart and mind during the day, just like you take a bath to remove dirt from your body.

When you practice cleaning every evening, you remove the day’s impressions and sometimes more.

When you have a meditation session with a Heartfulness trainer, deeper layers from the past are also cleaned away.

When you attend large group meditation sessions,

and also when you do all these three things regularly, over time the cleaning can be so effective that your whole system is purified.

Your mental body is then fully rejuvenated to its youthful, innocent state. You have a clean slate, an open mind and a pure heart. You are able to listen to your heart’s wisdom and feel clear about the decisions that you make. There is no room for guilt, anxiety or prejudices in such a state.

But an even better approach is to learn how to avoid forming impressions in the first place so that less and less cleaning is required. Then your system will be in a constant state of rejuvenation. For this, a much higher order of living is required, and this is another aspect of Heartfulness that is offered after you have mastered the initial practices.

The lightness you feel as a result of rejuvenative cleaning, the youthful happiness and joy, is something that is reminiscent of childhood – playing on a summer’s evening, flying kites or splashing in the ocean waves ●

THE SCIENCE OF *Awe & Compassion*

- PART 2 -

{ Q & A }

IN CONVERSATION WITH
DACHER KELTNER

PROFESSOR DACHER KELTNER is passionate about social justice and just as passionate about the experience of awe and wonder in daily life. In part 2 of his interview he shares more about the research being done at the Greater Good Science Center on awe and compassion and where he sees humanity heading.

Q I come from the tradition of Yoga and the Heartfulness heart-mind approach to meditation, whereas the Western Mindfulness movement has been much more focused on perception and being in the present. I think we are all realizing that we have to marry the two, because there are good things in both, and they have a lot to offer each other.

DK With all of our work, I take an evolutionary perspective that really began with Charles Darwin, who said that emotions – rooted in the heart – are our basic patterns of social living. Awe is this feeling of reverence for things that are bigger than the self, whether it be a vast nature scene or a beautiful building or being lost in reverie when you watch your child learn how to walk.

You are working with this connection, because you are Mindfulness guys working with compassion and the heart qualities. So I was really interested when you were talking about awe. How do you study the science of awe?

So the first step in our awe research is to figure out what produces it. It is actually pretty interesting – religion is less important than I thought. More important is nature and the magnanimity of other people. People are blown away with awe at how generous, kind and virtuous other people can be.

And then we have this working idea that awe helps us fold into strong social communities, helps us be humble, helps us sacrifice for others, helps us not think so much about the self and think about other people, helps us consider other perspective to our own.

Science is not only compatible with spirituality;
it is a profound source of spirituality.

CARL SAGAN

So we have done dozens of studies where we literally study people in awe-inspiring situations, out among redwood trees, looking at vistas, at musical concerts, in museums, and we have also figured out lab techniques where people watch BBC Planet Earth, and are struck by the wonder of the world, to document how awe makes us humble and sacrifice, and less ideologically stubborn, and creative and scientific. So a lot of good things are coming out of that work.

We also study the physiology as well, like why we have goose bumps.

Q That is fascinating, because the whole of Yogic science is based on wonder and awe. So to have some scientific studies on wonder is very interesting for me.

DK I practice Yoga, not in any disciplined way, but I do know that state of wonder you feel from Yoga, which is really what got me interested in awe in the first place. I remember doing Yoga when I was 17, when it was really not that popular in the United States, and I would come out of class just wonderstruck by things around me, and that is what we have been trying to figure out.

Q You also spoke about compassion. Tell us about the compassion movement in Mindfulness.

DK I think it traces back to the work of his Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism, where there are a lot of compassion exercises, and loving kindness exercises. Jack Kornfield does such a good job with these. We really think about the humanity of others, how they suffer, how they are trying to do well.

I do know that state of wonder you feel from Yoga, which is really what got me interested in awe in the first place ... I would come out of class just wonderstruck by things around me, and that is what we have been trying to figure out.

And the scientific work of Jon Kabat-Zinn, Richard Davison, Barbara Frederickson and others is showing that when we dwell in compassion as a contemplative exercise, our immune system does better, our brain chemistry shifts to positive emotions, we get happier, and the vagus nerve increases its baseline firing. The vagus nerve is this large bundle of nerves that helps us connect to other people and breathe and so on.

And it gets even more interesting in our work on the rawest form of compassion over the last 10 years. People come to the lab and they see images that are full of harm and suffering, literally tear-provoking stuff. And what we find is: even when seeing real harm and suffering, people feel more connected to humanity, the stereotypes they have towards each other fade away, the vagus nerves start firing, and they feel happier and stronger.

We have to embrace the suffering of other people. It is fundamental.

Q We are all connected.

DK Yes.

Q Finally, what is your vision of how things are going to change, because the world is going through a fair amount of turmoil, transition and change at the moment? Where do you see us going? How do we bring this compassion, this goodness, this wonder, etc. to a state where we bring the whole collective consciousness up to some level?

DK It was interesting writing this book on the power paradox, spending two years thinking about inequality and hierarchy and

dominance, and I will tell you what I believe is the direction we are going.

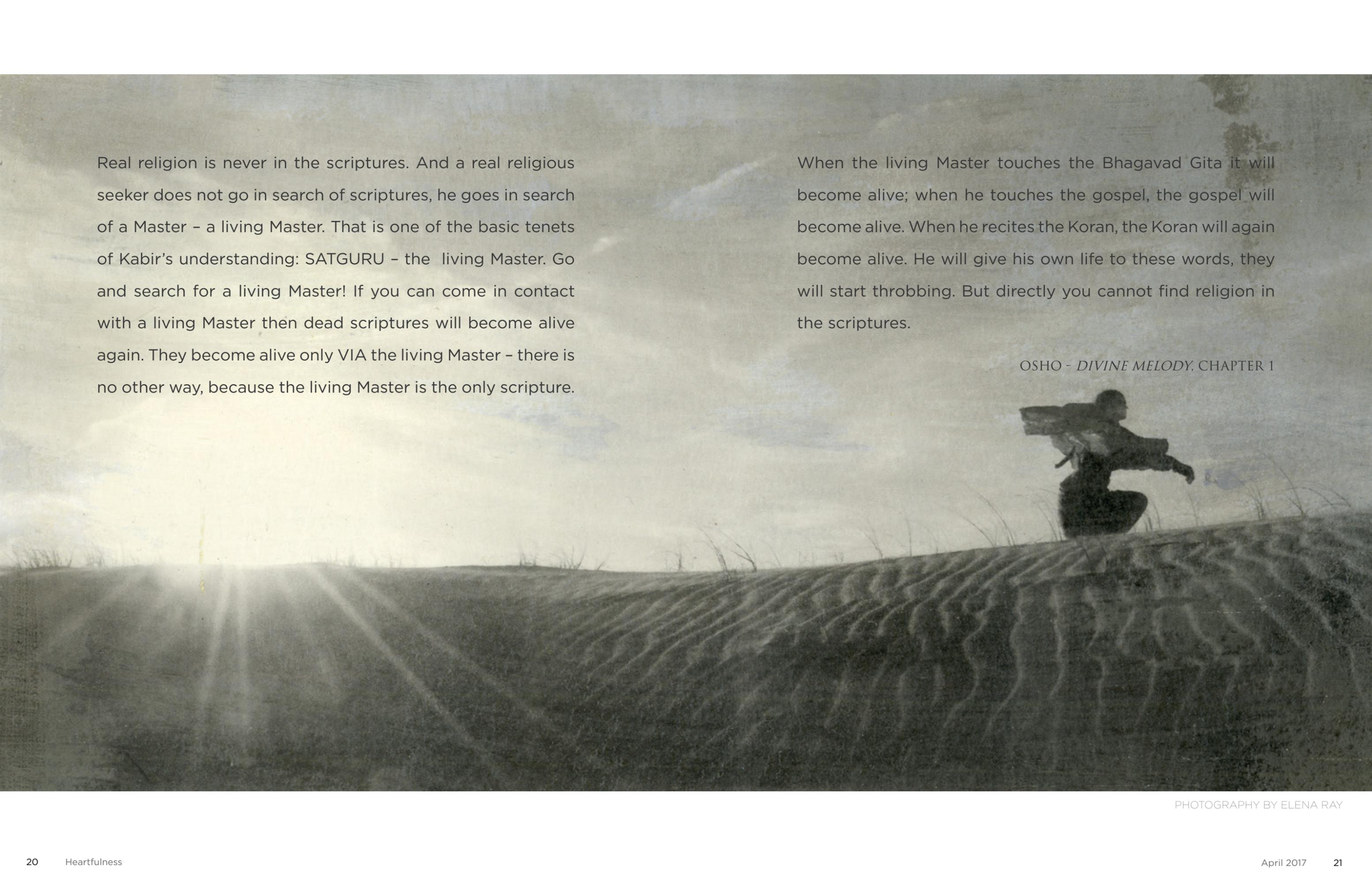
12,000 to 15,000 years ago, in hunter-gatherer societies, we were pretty egalitarian, with gender balance, lots of sharing, with pretty healthy, robust societies in which we evolved for 200,000 years. Archaeologists are suggesting that then as our settlements expanded we see the emergence of social trouble in the form of inequality, poverty, misogyny and polygamy, and slavery, where people start to believe they own other people.

I believe we have had this multi-pronged compassion revolution in the past three or four hundred years, which has slowly been emerging out of the hierarchical, domineering social structure. You see it in things like women rising in power and a better treatment of young children, and an attempt for society to abolish slavery. And also awareness of poverty: even though it is rampant in the United States, compared to where we were 300 years ago we are better off.

So I feel like there is a slow-moving shift towards compassion. It is a war with many fronts and you have to pick your fronts and keep fighting. For me personally it is about getting poor kids outdoors, and it is about our criminal justice system. For other people it is about helping young girls to feel confident so that they can lead in the world, and using compassion to fight injustice. And there are many ways in which we can do it.

Q Thank you so much Dacher for sharing your thoughts and your story.

DK Thank you Elizabeth, and thanks for being part of the movement ●

A photograph of a person sitting on a sand dune at sunset. The person is in silhouette, wearing a dark jacket and pants, and is sitting cross-legged. The sand dune has distinct ripples. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, oranges, and blues, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

Real religion is never in the scriptures. And a real religious seeker does not go in search of scriptures, he goes in search of a Master – a living Master. That is one of the basic tenets of Kabir’s understanding: SATGURU – the living Master. Go and search for a living Master! If you can come in contact with a living Master then dead scriptures will become alive again. They become alive only VIA the living Master – there is no other way, because the living Master is the only scripture.

When the living Master touches the Bhagavad Gita it will become alive; when he touches the gospel, the gospel will become alive. When he recites the Koran, the Koran will again become alive. He will give his own life to these words, they will start throbbing. But directly you cannot find religion in the scriptures.

OSHO - *DIVINE MELODY*, CHAPTER 1

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELENA RAY

Evolution of Consciousness Series

MATTER, ENERGY

AND THE

Absolute State

KAMLESH D. PATEL explores the various states of existence in the universe and in the make up of the human body. What is the role of consciousness in all this?

MOVEMENT AND STILLNESS

It is worthwhile here to revisit our understanding of the three bodies:



The causal body is the centre of our being, around which we have the subtle body or mind. Within this subtle body the main canvas is our consciousness upon which the other three functions play out: the ego, then the intellect, and then the thinking mind, from the centre outwards to the surface level of conscious thinking.

Beyond the subtle body, the physical body is then outermost, the most solid, material aspect of the layers that make up our being. We can understand the physical body with reference to the senses: it is through our senses that our physical being relates to the world around us.

We can understand the mind with respect to its faculty of thinking, as thought is the energetic expression of the subtle body. As we go deeper into the levels of the mind, we discover feeling, intuition, inspiration, and eventually the pure identity associated with the most refined ego.

We can understand the soul, the causal body, through its quality of inactivity. This also means it resists movement, and yet the nature of the soul is movement. This appears to be a paradox: movement and inactivity both define the soul. What is the meaning of this paradox?

Let's look at it from a few perspectives. First consider the movement of the earth on its axis. If you are sitting at the equator, the surface of the earth moves at a speed of roughly 1,000 miles per hour, so you are moving very fast as the earth spins. But if you are sitting at the North Pole, you will be very steady.

Another example is a spinning top – when it is moving fastest it appears to be standing still. The soul, though its nature is movement, behaves as if it is still. Like the top that is spinning very rapidly, consciousness can also move very rapidly. Or take another example: when you move from one room to another, if you go at a normal walking speed it appears as if you are moving, whereas if you go at the speed of light you appear to be in all the rooms at the same time.

Faster than the speed of light is thought. It can take light years for light to reach another galaxy, but the mind can reach there in no time at all. And consciousness is different again: consciousness is always there. There is no effort involved. Consciousness is not limited by space and time. The stillness paradox can be understood in this way.

When we go from the physical body to the subtle body to the causal body, we go from physical to subtler to the subtlest, in layers. The physical is here and now, as the body cannot travel into the past or the future, but the mind and consciousness can. When we think about things from the past or imagine them in the future, consciousness and the mind experience time travel. The mind goes there and consciousness registers the whole thing.

Now, the nature of the soul is steadiness, the stillness of the Absolute, which we gradually expose through a spiritual practice. When we want to dive deep into that stillness in meditation, to expose the inner soul, and externalise it through the mind, we have to be still. We cannot have a monkey mind jumping from idea to idea, and object to object. Only when there is stillness will the mind find resonance with the inner soul. Then we can say, "What was hidden is now exposed."

Let's explore this from another perspective. Consider the element sodium. Alone it is explosive. Combined with chlorine, which on its own is very toxic, it becomes the common salt we eat every day! Sodium is known as the terrorist element in the Periodic Table, because it is so highly reactive with the moisture present in air, but when it combines with chlorine it forms salt, without which there is no existence possible. So two opposites come together to create a compound that is very stable.

Two frequencies coming together in the same direction, with the same amplitude, are able to potentiate each other, whereas, a wave coming in the opposite direction nullifies or neutralises the first one. Now, in order to expose the soul in our existence, our lifestyle should reflect and amplify the divinity in our being by resonating in the same direction. And how can we do that in daily life? With what should we be resonating to take us in the direction we want to go?

We have to tune our thoughts, ideas and actions to the frequency of another person who has already reached the destination. This is one role of the Guide: we tune to the Guide's frequency like the instruments of an orchestra tune to the first violinist before playing a symphony. If we go in the same direction as the Guide's frequency, then the amplitude grows. If we go in the opposite direction, we nullify the effect, just like waves are neutralized. It is simply a matter of being in tune. Resonate to potentiate.

There is another interesting concept with the elements of the Periodic Table. How many elements are there? There are 118 currently, of which 94 occur naturally, whereas in the Vedas our ancients said that we are made up of only five 'elements' – the *pancha bhutas*. Obviously these five elements

are not the elements of the Periodic Table; they are more like states of matter. For example one of the five *bhutas* is water, and pure water is itself made up of two elements, hydrogen and oxygen, as H₂O.

These days, science is more refined than it was thousands of years ago; as you would hope, scientific knowledge has evolved. It may look as if science is refuting the Vedas, but it is not so. Science continues to give us more and more refined knowledge. Do you disprove particle theory once you introduce wave theory in physics? No, you have added something more, built upon what was previously understood.

Faster than the speed of light is thought. It can take light years for light to reach another galaxy, but the mind can reach there in no time at all. And consciousness is different again: consciousness is always there. There is no effort involved. Consciousness is not limited by space and time.

Now, let's look more deeply into matter by studying the *bhutas* and their components – the elements, then the atoms, and then the subatomic particles, etc. The five *bhutas* are earth, water, fire, air and *akasha* or ether. Water is a compound made up of hydrogen and oxygen. Air is made up of so many gases, such as oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide, helium, argon, etc., which are made up further of elements, atoms and subatomic particles. Then there is earth, containing even more elements. The word 'earth' is primarily used to help us understand and describe the solidity of that *bhuta*.

Then comes *akasha*. What is it made of? Nothingness. It is like consciousness, upon which everything is based. In the same way, *akasha* is the substratum, the fundamental base. It was never created as it was always there. The soul is also like that. No one can create it. The soul partakes of the nature of *akasha*.

Now, what happens when we try to dissect these *bhutas*? When we break water into hydrogen and oxygen, for example, and then we break the hydrogen atom itself, what happens? So much energy is generated that hundreds of thousands of people can be killed.

Now where does that energy come from? It comes from splitting the nucleus of an atom, which contains protons and neutrons. And what is a proton? It is a positive charge. What is an electron? It is a negative charge. They say there is no weight in an electron, and yet it has a charge, whereas a proton has both weight and charge. What is it that gives weight to the proton as well as the charge? It is the way it spins; the way the vibrations are made. It spins so fast that weight is created. The movement of neutrons is also so fast that weight is created. But within the neutron the movements are of an opposing nature, so the charge is neutralised. Thus there is only weight.

When we go further into this, we see that the cause of the charge and weight in these subatomic particles is vibration. In a proton, vibrations are positive, in a neutron they are positive and negative, and in an electron they are negative. So energy is behind the formation of atoms, and thus the formation of matter. Behind matter there is nothing but positive and negative charge – what the Vedas called *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is the dazzling part, the luminous part, the negative charge of the electrons.

And this positive and negative polarity is necessary in this world. Everything in Nature partakes of these opposing characteristics for it to exist, move and expand. Take for example a current of electricity: it requires a positive and negative charge for it to flow. Without the opposites playing their part there is no movement, and there is no expansion.

Can we call this level of subatomic vibration consciousness? Not yet, although consciousness also has a vibrational frequency of some order.

Hydrogen is the simplest element of all: in hydrogen we find only one proton and one electron. In helium there is more complexity – there are two electrons, two protons and one or two neutrons, depending upon which helium isotope we are talking about. Sodium has still more complexity, and the elements go on becoming more and more complex. In a thousand years perhaps we will see even more complex elements than we have now, and in fact they may already exist somewhere, waiting to be discovered.

And there was something there before hydrogen came into being, and that something goes on supporting everything. And perhaps behind all this is consciousness. And consciousness is supported by the fundamental substratum, *akasha*, the Absolute.

EFFORTLESS EFFORTS

Now, let's come back to this idea of the soul with its absolute steadiness. When we are so busy with the material world, fulfilling desires one after the other, the mind is active. Even the idea that "I want to reach the pinnacle of the spiritual journey" creates disturbance inside. Why would we be disturbed by this thought when it is our goal? It is because we make so much effort, like using a crane to lift up a tiny needle!

That is why Patanjali told us to relax all our efforts, because when we make efforts we get too 'involved' and that creates deviation, keeping us restricted to the process. Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle says the same thing – if we make an effort to determine the speed of a particle, we will not find the position of the particle, and if we find the position we will not be able to determine the speed. It is in the nature of things. Why is it so? In order to measure something, it has to be done by something subtler than the thing being measured, so as not to disturb it. Grosser cannot measure the subtler, so what can measure the position of an electron? Only something subtler and thus more potent than an electron!

But who can say that efforts are not needed? Only a person who has reached the pinnacle. We do need to make efforts until we reach that point, but in such a way that our balance is not tilted. Because when it is tilted, the play of desires will dominate. The more desires we have, the more disturbances there will be in the mind and the mind will play havoc.

A better way is like the element sodium: if you leave it alone in the air it will explode, it is a terrorist, but when it joins with chlorine it is stabilized. And so it is with the mind; so it is with the soul. Until the union of Yoga happens, there is no stability, there is incompleteness, whereas the completeness that arises from the union of Yoga brings stability and balance.

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THE EFFECT OF 'NO ENERGY' ON THE FIELD OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Yogic transmission has no energy in it. As described above, the elements are made up of pockets of energies, and within each element there are so many pockets of positive and negative energies moving in many complex directions at various levels of frequency. When we are trying to remove the impressions at a certain chakra or plexus in the human system, certain molecules or compounds in the cells are affected, and the vibratory levels of the subatomic particles within the molecules are also affected in some way. And this transmission, in which no energy is transmitted, works its magic and removes things.

So, to summarize, we understand that the physical body is supported by the subtle bodies. Within the subtle bodies, the thinking mind is supported by a subtler body, which is called the intellect, and the intellect is further supported by an even subtler body called the ego. All these are supported by the soul, which is even subtler.

All these levels of subtlety are there; the chakras or plexuses are formed, multiple compounds are there, which are supported by vibrations of a complex nature. Transmission has no energy, it is a forceless force, which is subtler than consciousness. It is this transmission that can alter consciousness.

So we can say that there are three states:

MATTER

ENERGY

NO ENERGY (ABSOLUTE)

Also there is subtle, subtler and subtlest. In the universe we can say that matter is manifested, and it is supported from behind by energy, which is supported from behind by the Absolute state, which has no energy.

The ultimate state of the Absolute cannot be described by giving worldly examples. In this world there is nothing comparable and as perfect as the Absolute. So how can it be described? Hence the ancient sages said, "Neti! Neti! Neti!" – not this, not this, not this. Nothingness. This is the realm of God ●



DR ICHAK ADIZES explores the topic of a meaningful life and what really brings us happiness in the material world. It is not what you may think: the evidence is mounting that it surely is not in fulfilling desires and pleasures. Read on ...

On Happiness

The pursuit of happiness is a right given to us by the US Constitution. Is there any sane human being who does not yearn to be happy? But be careful. Not all roads to happiness are functional. There is evidence that seeking pleasure as a way to be happy could actually be the wrong focus in life.

A new book by Emily Esfahani Smith presents the research that inspired this articles. It is called *The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life That Matters*¹.

Seeking and living a life of pleasure might make you happy in the short run, but without deeper meaning it could make you miserable over time. Like sugar, it is sweet and gratifying while consumed, but has undesirable side effects in the long run.

Drugs, sex without love, and rich food all provide short-term gratification; they might make you happy for a while only to be followed by a feeling of emptiness over time.

Why?

People who pursue happiness are takers. They take from life as much as possible, in any way that will gratify them, and as soon as possible. When a person who is dependent on instant gratification is not given the pleasure they insist on having, they feel like a baby who is pulled away from their mother's breast. They cry with or without tears. Depending on the age.

So, what does make people happy in the long run? A meaningful life, the author says.

People who have a meaningful life are givers and not takers. At times they may be miserable. Giving and sacrificing are hard work, but in the long run they fulfill. Take parenting as an example. It does not make you happy to have a rebellious teenager, but over time there will be moments of absolute happiness, like when grandchildren arrive. You know the joke: grandchildren are the reward you get for not killing your children.

So, pursuing happiness by seeking immediate rewards is instantly gratifying, but can make you miserable in the long run.

Pursuing a meaningful life can be difficult and full of sacrifice at times, but can be extremely gratifying in the long run.

This insight helps explain to me why people who had an active and productive work life often die soon after retiring. They feel useless. Meanwhile, people who continue to contribute to society have a sense of purpose and something to live for. Have

you noticed older retired people volunteering to be receptionists at hospitals or to direct people to the right elevator? There appears to be a need to be needed.

The longer you feel needed the longer you live.

People who have a purpose in life, beyond their immediate happiness, behave as if possessed. And they are, by the purpose of their life. They do not get annoyed by the little things that drive those seeking instant gratification up the wall. They have deeper meaning to their life; they have a sense of purpose. Their eyes are focused on the horizon and not on the pebbles at their feet.

To live a meaningful life, do not ask yourself *why* you exist. You won't find the answer. Ask yourself *what* for you exist. There must be a purpose. To what will you dedicate your life?

Be a giver. Give as a parent, a worker, a lover, or as a son or a daughter. Give to the community. Give to the weak and needy. Give to art. Give to anything that inspires you. Fill your life with a purpose beyond your own needs.

Have gratitude that life enables you to make others happy. In the happiness of others you can find your own.

Just thinking ●

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¹ Published by Crown Publishing in January 2017.

The Power of *Simplicity*

SWATI KANNAN explores the nature of simplicity and how we can cultivate it in our lives. As Leonardo da Vinci once said, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

The irony of our current time is that we live in a complex world, replete with computers, phones and machines, which are all supposed to simplify our lives. But our lives are not simpler because of them. For example, 20 years ago when I traveled, I carried a book, headphones and a small music player. Now I carry my iPhone, a small iPad with an assortment of e-books, a MacBook, and two sets of headphones – both cord and Bluetooth. I truly believe I need all these items to travel. Of course, this just reflects an inability to simplify my life, despite technology's attempt to do so.

As humans, we gravitate towards complexity. The sunset sky with multiple colors appears more stunning than a simpler, monochromatic blue sky. A laptop with multiple features seems more attractive than a mere typewriter. We hear that beauty is found in simplicity, but what does it mean to be simple? Simplicity is not the opposite of complexity. Many things in nature are complex. The human machinery is complex in design, yet all the parts are necessary for its function. So when we describe the opposite of simplicity, we mean anything that is unnecessary or additional, created by human desire.

Simplicity can characterize a personality – a person's desires and behaviors, thoughts and mindset. A simple-minded person is not a simpleton; in fact, he performs tasks using only the necessary parts, and not one part more. I believe that simplicity characterizes an inner mental condition, wherein an individual engages in external activities without being attached and uses technology without needing any of it. As Gandhi stated so eloquently, "You may have occasion to possess or use material things, but the secret of life lies in never missing them."

Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Buddha represent the quintessential personas of simplicity. They dressed simply, spoke simply, ate simply and lived simply. Living selflessly, they devoted their services to help others. When Gandhi passed away, he possessed fewer than ten objects, and he did not own a house. Gandhi grew up in a prosperous family but did not miss the material trappings, as he was a man of non-possession. Siddhartha Gautama, who later became the Buddha, also shunned the material trappings of a king to pursue a simple and spiritual life. But we do not need to live such a minimalist life to be simple. We also do not

need to be unambitious in a worldly sense to be simple. For example, Gandhi himself studied law in England and was an educated man, and Siddhartha Gautama was a prince and quite protected within the confines of the palace and its comforts.

Fundamentally, simplicity indicates a mental state, which is then projected onto the material aspects of life.

Babuji of Shahjahanpur wrote, "Simplicity is the essence of nature. It is the reflection of that which originated at the very beginning of existence."¹ In other words, to be simple is to be in tune with nature. Both Babuji's and Buddha's lives exemplify this principle of simplicity. Babuji worked as a clerk in a courthouse without expecting any praise or monetary gains. He lived humbly and preached balance in both material and spiritual life. Similarly, Buddha, who lived an ascetic life after renouncing his kingdom, later encouraged disciples to live a balanced simple life, not one of extremes.

To become simple is actually a difficult process, if forced. Various meditation practices discuss the need for simplicity but what are the tools to attain it? In Heartfulness, the evening cleaning is a practice to remove the complexities from our hearts, thus resulting in a simpler state of being. With consistent meditation and cleaning practice, these complexities will naturally subside. When complexities leave, what remains? Simplicity. The changes are then reflected in our simpler material tastes. Nothing should be forced. With regular practice, we will naturally become simpler.

Once the inner state becomes simpler, sensitivity also develops within the heart. Developing

Purity of heart, mental simplicity and inner sensitivity can become the ultimate tools on our journey.

sensitivity is often stressed in Heartfulness practice, for this quality enables seekers to discern their own spiritual conditions. After meditation, we experience a certain divine state, and if we become sensitive to this we can hope to retain and enliven it throughout the day. Spiritual sensitivity is paramount to self-awareness on this mystical journey of the soul. It is akin to traveling in a train through countryside with eyes wide open, observing the rustic landscape along the way. If your eyes are closed, you will miss the scenery. Similarly, sensitivity enables us to observe our spiritual landscape and to help maintain and even surpass an existing inner condition.

Furthermore, heightened sensitivity results in empathy towards the plight of others and ensues compassion for fellow human beings. Mother Teresa embodied sensitivity, for her compassion towards others outshone her own desires. She dedicated her life to serving others above fulfilling her own needs, and her needs were very simple. Similarly, true spiritual gurus also live simply and devote themselves to serving humanity. Their lives illustrate that simplicity is one of the noblest of qualities if we want to serve any human cause. But we cannot develop spiritual or human sensitivity if complexities reside in the heart.

¹ Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur, 1989. *Complete Works of Ram Chandra*, Volume 1, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, India



The simple and still nature of the soul has been lost amidst the intricacies imposed by the life we have created. Thus, if we can attempt to simplify outwardly and to remove complexities inwardly, then we can rediscover the purity of the soul. William Wordsworth summarizes this nicely: "Many undervalue the power of simplicity. But it is the real key to the heart."

At the end, what is the purpose of becoming simple? Spiritual leaders urge us to become simpler in our tastes, desires, likes, habits, speech, etc. The goal of a spiritual quest is to negate oneself over time, and simplifying ourselves facilitates this process towards negation. God is defined as many things, paradoxically making him indescribable. Thus, if we want to become God-like, we must also become indefinable. As Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh states,

"When we hide ourselves, we expose God." Both spiritual and material simplicity develop congruously, with meditation and self-awareness at the core. Simple living then becomes an expression of divinity.

"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." Leonardo da Vinci uttered these words over 500 years ago, and today they still reverberate the truth, as the world continues to reform itself technologically and spiritually. Purity of heart, mental simplicity and inner sensitivity can become the ultimate tools on our journey towards negation and mergence ●

Rejuvenate

When work becomes stressful, tiring, or simply boring, here are some ways to put the spring back in your step.

@ WORK



Find 5 reasons why you like your job.



How will you affect your workplace in a positive way today? Do 3 things that will make a positive difference.

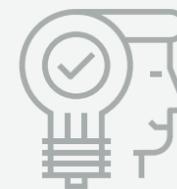


Do some random acts of kindness for your colleagues, e.g. buy someone a coffee without them knowing who it was, place chocolates on someone's desk, or stack the printer with paper.

Remove the heaviness that is burdening your heart and mind. Take a few minutes to practice the Heartfulness rejuvenation technique, called Cleaning. You will feel light, uncomplicated and revitalized.



What are the best moments you have had at work? What was special about them? Can you re-create a similar feeling and atmosphere today?



Let go of any grudges you hold about anyone at work. It is not worth investing your energy in negative thinking that will not go anywhere. You are the one who suffers from those negative thoughts, as they pull your inner state to a lower level.



Remember William Wordsworth's poetry:
"Those best parts of a good life: little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love."



Standing on a Whale, FISHING FOR MINNOWS

KRISHNA SAI tries to understand the pinnacle of human achievement, and what that means for him.

Ever since I first ran into this Polynesian saying, it has conjured a powerful image that has stuck in my mind's eye - challenging, prodding, encouraging, teasing me. Mythology and the science of the expanse seems to be filled with metaphors that are meant to evoke that very response within the conscious beings that we are supposed to be!

This particular adage, while being a simple statement about realizing one's full potential, poses some questions:

Why are we filling our lives with seemingly external trivial, trite pursuits, while there is an infinite treasure that we carry within us all the time?

And what can we do about it?

'We' here refers to us as individuals, to organizations, to countries and to economies, and what on earth is 'full potential'? It reminds me of a funny but ironic incident when a teacher in my college said to me, "It's only upwards for you in life." While I was rejoicing in that moment, which I perceived to be praiseworthy, he added, "You have reached rock bottom!" Is there an equivalent opposite of 'rock bottom' that represents the pinnacle?



Our lives are mostly an expression of our impressions - almost like the continuum of the winding and unwinding of a mechanical toy. While some of this is an automatic phenomenon of our physiology, one can't help but wonder if Nature expected more from us as conscious beings endowed with choice and will.

We see examples of this throughout the course of history - Abraham Lincoln during emancipation, Gandhi organizing a mass non-violent freedom movement, Mother Teresa's infinite compassion, the genius of Albert Einstein, the soul-stirring poetry of Subramania Bharati¹, and the Buddha's courage to get to the bottom of it all!

Who amongst us has not longed for that pure, untainted wonder that we see in the eyes of a child? As we go through life, we form subtle impressions that harden and condition us, and as we get older they control our thoughts and actions and life itself.

"You have to unlearn what you have learned," says Yoda.

"The human mind is a drunken monkey pricked by a needle," mocks that giant of the human spirit, Swami Vivekananda.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subramania_Bharati

As a result I found a daily discipline that trains the mind to regulate thinking, lets go of inbuilt tendencies, and connects with a state of inner awareness of one's place in the universe.

It helps me remember, every day, that while I may not quite yet visualize or realize what that pinnacle means to me, the search for it gives meaning and purpose to existence, and anchors a conscious life – one where there is harmony between the heart, mind and body.

And we see this ourselves whenever we try to quieten our mind, only to feel that uncontrollable urge to pick up the phone and respond to the latest cat meme.

There is a beautiful word in Sanskrit – *sankalpa* – that can be translated simplistically as 'thought + will'. This is perhaps the definition of endeavoring to achieve. To get there however, requires practice and training, as Luke Skywalker realized.

I wonder what we could achieve as individuals, as organizations, and as a human species, if there was a basis of purpose, the will to execute with clarity, humility and resolve? It requires the understanding that value creation needs to be holistic and inclusive – some of the same Level 5 Leadership qualities espoused by Jim Collins and the leaders that exemplify his concepts².

I was fortunate that I had some of these crazy thoughts early enough in my life, and that I did watch that Star Wars episode! As a result I found a daily discipline that trains the mind to regulate thinking, lets go of inbuilt tendencies, and connects with a state of inner awareness of one's place in the universe. This practice is called Heartfulness.

It helps me remember, every day, that while I may not quite yet visualize or realize what that pinnacle means to me, the search for it gives meaning and purpose to existence, and anchors a conscious life – one where there is harmony between the heart, mind and body.

To this I salute ●

² <http://www.jimcollins.com/books.html>



Work is love made visible.

KAHLIL GIBRAN

Let's Meditate App

Meditate with a Heartfulness trainer anywhere anytime.



letsmeditate@heartfulness.org
Download on Android or iOS



TERRAN DAILY continues her series on the New Children, this time looking at how to create an environment that supports children's sensitivity and need for calm.



*Creating a Soothing,
Productive Environment:*



LIVING WITH THE New Children

It is so easy to want children to just do as we say. Many of us have busy, stressful lives, and it's frustrating when children are resistant to our requests or cannot seem to manage themselves, their responsibilities and belongings. And yet, when we express our frustration, scold them or even try to explain why they should do what we want, things sometimes get worse.

Let's look at it from the child's perspective for a moment. What is the world like for them?

Many of the New Children have been born with very sensitive systems. Yet even before birth, many have also been met with a barrage of stimulation. Things beep, flash and make noise: TV, computers, cell phones, traffic, airplanes, air conditioners, microwaves, fluorescent lights, LED lights and light throughout the night. Add to this the many stressed families on tight schedules, long hours in school or daycare, a stream of frightening news and violence on the television, radio or computer games, and it's no wonder children sometimes feel overwhelmed, frightened and confused.

How do you respond when you feel overwhelmed, frightened and confused? I tend to become numb. The world seems to recede away from me, and I have trouble organizing myself. I become absent-minded. I know other people who become hyper-vigilant and try to control their environment, including the people around them. Other people take everything personally and are easily hurt or angered. They may lash out in ways that don't seem warranted.

Children respond in all these ways too. To us they look resistant or poorly behaved, but maybe they

are just trying to exist in a difficult and confusing world. When we get upset with them, their world gets worse, and their behavior spirals in the wrong direction.

So what can we do to help? What I'd like to focus on in this article is creating a soothing environment. Here are some ideas:



BE SURE YOUR CHILD GETS ENOUGH SLEEP

No one can function well without enough sleep. The National Sleep Foundation recommends the following:

Toddlers 1-3 years old need 11-14 hours within a 24 hour period, including naps.

Preschoolers 3-5 years old need 11-13 hours, including a decreasing number of naps.

School age children 6-13 need 9-11 hours per night.

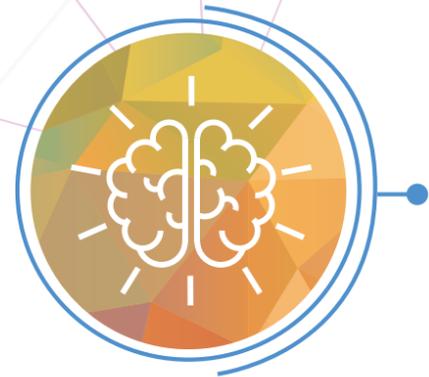
Teenagers need 8-10 hours. Many people do not know that teens experience a spurt in brain development and need extra sleep to learn at their best. Studying late into the night and not getting enough sleep may be counter-productive.

ESTABLISH A DAILY ROUTINE

Knowing what comes next helps a child to feel safe. When my granddaughter Zoe came to visit, we wrote out a schedule each morning. I was happy to see that she continued the practice when she went back home. I visited her home and found a schedule, all in her own handwriting, posted on the refrigerator.



Children respond in all these ways too. To us they look resistant or poorly behaved, but maybe they are just trying to exist in a difficult and confusing world. When we get upset with them, their world gets worse, and their behavior spirals in the wrong direction.



GO FOR HIGH QUALITY SLEEP

The National Sleep Council recommends:

Stick to a consistent sleep schedule at all ages.

Develop a relaxing bedtime routine – quiet play, stories, songs, etc. – that ends in the room where the child will be sleeping. No TV or computers within an hour of bedtime.

Sleep in the same environment every night. It should be cool, quiet and dark. The brain produces the sleep hormone melatonin only in complete darkness. Check for light from computers, clock radios or the next room, and eliminate it if possible.



USE MUSIC AND SOUND

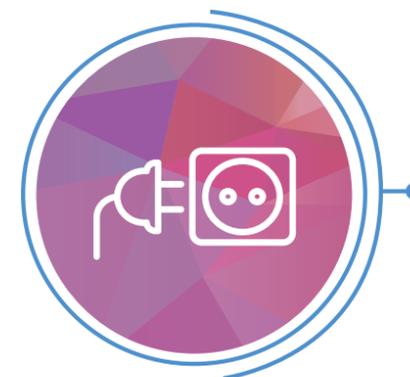
Music can be a wonderful tool for creating a soothing, relaxing environment. Try entering ‘music for relaxation’ into your favorite search engine and you will find pages of options. The US-based company, Advanced Brain Technologies, offers the ‘Sound Health’ series of CDs with music scientifically designed to promote activities from relaxation and sleep to learning and creativity to motivation and productivity.

Another resource is ‘Brain Time’, which uses a sound-based technology to increase the brain’s capacity for memory, focus, creativity, meditation and sleep.



MAKE YOUR HOME AS TOXIN-FREE AS POSSIBLE

Toxins are everywhere now – in our air, water, food, clothing, body care products, furniture and household cleaners. It is not possible to avoid them altogether, but we can minimize them. The Environmental Working Group’s website has excellent Consumer Guides to help in choosing the safest products. It is US-based so may have limited direct application in other countries, but at the very least it can help educate us in how to read ingredients labels and what to avoid.



EXPERIMENT WITH UNPLUGGING

Many parents report an improvement in their child’s attention, behavior, mood and sleep quality when they remove electromagnetic radiation (EMR) from their home. Dr Toril Jelter, a pediatrician in Walnut Creek, California, recommends a two-week EMR reduction trial to see how it affects the problems the child may be having. Her protocol includes the following:

Turn off Wi-Fi at night for at least 12 hours. If you need internet access, use Ethernet or any other direct connection.

Unplug all cordless phones.

Keep all mobile devices at least six feet from children and always off in the car.

From the fuse or breaker box, turn off the electricity to your child’s bedroom at night. Keep a flashlight near their bed, ready for them to use if needed.

Use a problem rating scale from 1 to 10 to compare problems before and after the trial. She has had some remarkable results.

I hope some of these ideas and resources are helpful to you.

FURTHER EXPLORATION

‘Children and Sleep’ on the National Sleep Foundation website at <http://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/children-and-sleep>.

‘Sound Health’ on the Advanced Brain Technologies website at <http://advancedbrain.com/soundhealth/sound-health.html>.

Brain Time website at <http://www.braintime.com/>.

‘Consumer Guides’ on the Environmental Working Group’s website at <http://www.ewg.org/consumer-guides>.

‘Calming Behavior in Children with Autism and ADHD: The Electromagnetic Radiation Lowering Protocol’, on the OpEdNews website at http://www.opednews.com/articles/Calming-Behavior-in-Childr-by-Katie-Singer-Adhd_Autism_Behavior-Modification_Behaviorism-141123-110.html ●



Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VAN GOETHE

THE ENERGY CHALLENGE:

How to Use Energy Wisely?

DR SANJEEV SHARMA addresses one of the most common causes of illness today. And it looks like we are closer to having the solution.

People are experiencing burnout like never before. It's easy to see why. Between cell phones, pagers and instance messaging – not to mention job demands, family responsibilities and a nonstop flow of obligations and commitments – we can sometimes be on call 24/7. No matter how many tasks we cross off our 'to do' lists, they keep getting longer. Then there are the additional threats from terrorism, SARS, West Nile virus and other newly-minted infectious diseases that fuel our anxiety levels.

Just thinking about it can make us worry, compromising the sleep we so desperately need to replenish our dwindling energy reserves. We yawn and stumble through our days, feeling simultaneously tired and wired.

Does this sound familiar? If so, you may be one of the millions of world citizens who chronically expend more energy than they have. This imbalance puts an enormous stress on both body and mind. It is also a leading cause of illness in today's developed world, where an estimated 80 percent of health problems stem from stress.

To get a clearer picture of how overspending your energy reserves affects your health, imagine your body as a car battery, constantly using energy without ever fully recharging. In other words more energy is expended than replaced, so less and less juice is available over time. Eventually, the battery wears down, and the engine won't turn over.

WE ARE ENERGY

We tend to think of our bodies as solid structures – bone, muscle, organs, and the arteries and veins through which our blood circulates. In reality, we can condense the solid matter in the human body to the size of a thimble. The rest is space – space within cells, space between cells, and space between organs. Connecting and enlivening all these parts is the energy that our cells produce. That's what keeps us going. Without an adequate energy supply, our health suffers.

Ancient Chinese healers recognized this thousands of years ago. They devised acupuncture, the healing discipline that acts directly on the body's energy centres. So did the ancient Indian scientists and spiritual teachers who created Yoga techniques to elevate *prana*, the Vedic word for life force. They understood that energy is our most precious human resource, and just like the energy that heats our homes and fuels our automobiles, the energy in our bodies is finite.

Our challenge?

To use our energy wisely while doing everything we can to make sure we don't run low.

Continually tapping our energy supply without replenishing it has a negative affect on our health and well-being. Until we learn to maintain balance

between how much energy we burn and how much we store, we will not feel our best.

Every action, thought, emotion and especially stress uses energy. Where exactly does all that energy come from? Each cell produces its own energy supply via the mitochondria that live within its walls. They are the microscopic structures that convert nutrients from food into energy. The cells then store this energy in molecules called ATP (adenosine triphosphate) and CP (creatine phosphate), which transport and release energy as necessary.

The instructions for producing ATP and CP are encoded in our DNA. When our mitochondria generate enough of these molecules, our cells have plenty of energy for all the biological activities needed to function well. But if our mitochondria can't keep up with the energy demands, we risk a cellular energy crisis.

Another thing that affects the energy-producing ability of mitochondria is injury to our DNA and cellular membranes. Oxygen free radicals wreak havoc on our bodies, damaging our DNA and attacking essential components of our cells, but these unstable molecules also have the potential to do good – helping to destroy infectious viruses

Continually tapping our energy supply without replenishing it has a negative affect on our health and well-being. Until we learn to maintain balance between how much energy we burn and how much we store, we will not feel our best.

and bacteria. The phrases 'oxidative stress' and 'oxidative damage' refer to the harm inflicted by oxygen free radicals on our DNA, cell walls and proteins. As this damage accumulates, our cells' capacity to generate energy declines. This leads to cell death, tissue damage, aging and age-related degenerative diseases.

Brain cells run at a very high metabolic rate – they are the gas guzzlers of the body's energy. So they are especially vulnerable to oxidative damage and energy crises. Inadequate energy leads to a loss of neurons, our nerve cells. This accelerates brain aging and the onset of degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

It may also manifest as chest pain or a heart attack, high blood pressure, stomach irritation, an ulcer, reduced immunity and other health problems, depending on individual vulnerabilities. It can also lead to impotence in men and the cessation of menstruation in women.

Before we can stop the stress cycle, we must understand the consequences of energy depletion without energy renewal – which is what occurs when the stress response system remains in high gear for long periods of time. Remember that 80 percent of all medical illnesses are triggered or worsened by stress!

THE STRESS-ENERGY EQUATION

Medical researchers have now discovered that the stress response system in the human body also regulates the body's management of energy. The stress response system itself runs on energy, so it too can fall victim to chronic energy depletion.

The two main components of our stress response system are the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system and the hypo-thalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. The autonomic nervous system regulates the body's involuntary functions – heart rate, blood pressure, the dilation and constriction of blood vessels, respiration, digestion and the activity of smooth muscles. The autonomic nervous system has two branches – the sympathetic and parasympathetic. They balance each other. The sympathetic branch is responsible for the release of hormones that accelerate heart rate and respiration. The parasympathetic branch has the opposite effect, slowing heart rate and respiration.

The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis regulates the adrenal hormones which influence many aspects of the state of equilibrium throughout the body, including the storage and release of fuel, suppression of the immune system and reproduction.

This elegant stress response system was designed to be activate for relatively short periods of time, followed by longer intervals of recovery and rejuvenation. It worked well when we were hunters and gatherers, fighting or fleeing from tigers and bears, or even when we lived in rural towns. But with the crunch of modern city living, now our bodies endure prolonged levels of chronic stress, and the stress hormones keep on pumping.

What is the result? The stress hormones that are essential for short-term survival keep our bodies running on overdrive. Our cells are unable to fully replenish their energy reserves or make critical repairs.

HOW DO WE AVOID AN ENERGY CRISIS

We can think of the parasympathetic nervous system as the Environmental Protection Agency of the body. Just as mandatory speed limits conserve fuel, the parasympathetic system reduces energy expenditure by slowing the heart and respiratory rates and calming the brain. This enables cells to slow their energy production and reduce the release of oxygen free radicals.

The cellular defences then have a chance to neutralize existing free radicals and repair damage before it becomes so severe that the cells lose their capacity to produce energy.

You may wonder why mastering a new computer program or learning a new skill is relatively easy, while altering a gut reaction is virtually impossible. The reason: in general, changing our emotional wiring is more difficult, but it can be done.

A NEW TAKE ON AN OLD PROBLEM

In the past few years, medical research has underscored the crucial role of the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) in healing the body from the damaging effects of stress. Scientists long believed that the best way to counteract stress was to minimise the fight or flight response activated by the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). They underestimated the importance of replenishing depleted energy reserves, which is the job of the PNS.

The vagus nerve is also a major conduit for mind-body interactions: the next time you experience a 'gut reaction', know that your vagus is speaking to you. When we experience stress, the SNS revs up the heart rate and instructs the body to burn more energy. But the vagus nerves, which are the body's largest parasympathetic nerves, slow the heart and conserve energy. Studies suggest that this calming action protects against stress-related damage. The therapeutic potential of improving parasympathetic function is now being recognised.

You may wonder why mastering a new computer program or learning a new skill is relatively easy, while altering a gut reaction is virtually impossible. The reason: in general, changing our emotional wiring is more difficult, but it can be done.

How? Positive emotional experiences, in the form of healthy relationships, good nutrition, creative expression, spiritual practices such as meditation and yoga, and many forms of psychotherapy can all help to liberate us from over-reactive response patterns. In a nutshell, try to integrate the material and spiritual aspects of your life and you will better manage the chronic stresses of 21st century city living ●

Wherever you go, go with all your heart.

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Photos & recipes by Simonne Holm

Here are some simple and delicious smoothies that will help alkalize your system:

Highly alkaline smoothies

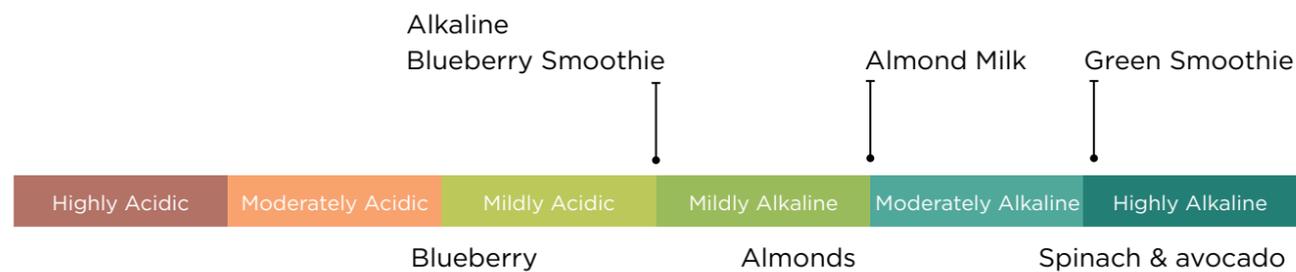
Alkaline green smoothies are an easy and quick way to get your nourishing breakfast full of nutrients, fibers and easily digestible vitamins.

Start your day by drinking one large glass as your first meal and keep the rest for later or to go. When you are hungry, just drink a glass of your green nectar and feel the vitality surge through your body.

Mildly alkaline smoothies

A balance between berries, fruit, vegetables, nuts and spices can make your smoothie taste delicious and still be mildly alkaline. Even kids will enjoy these smoothies with berries, and you can add avocado, spinach or other green vegetables in the smoothie while it still remains dark purple in colour and maintain the sweet taste of berries.

These are magic ingredients that will transform the smoothie with health benefits, too.



THE MOST ALKALINE VEGETABLES

Broccoli, celery, cucumber, green kale, bell pepper, spinach, sprouts and wheatgrass.

THE MOST ALKALINE NUTS AND SEEDS

Almonds, chia seeds, hemp seeds and sesame seeds.

THE MOST ALKALINE FRUITS

Avocado, tomato, lemon and lime.

THE MOST ALKALINE FATS, OILS & SALT

Avocado oil, coconut oil, flax oil, grapeseed oil, hemp oil, virgin olive oil, omega 3 oil and pure salt (Himalayan salt).



Highly Alkaline Green Smoothie



Alkaline Blueberry Smoothie

Highly Alkaline Green Smoothie

INGREDIENTS

1 green pepper without seeds
1 lemon without peel
1 avocado
2-3 leaves chard/silver beet
1 handful spinach
2-4 tablespoons virgin olive oil
1-2 cups pure water to dilute
2-4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Himalayan salt to taste

- Wash all vegetables.
- In a blender add the all ingredients and blend at high speed.

Enjoy!

The recipe yields approximately 2 cups.

You can vary with flax oil or extra virgin coconut oil, and add as you wish.

- Keep the green smoothie refrigerated in an airtight glass container for a maximum of 2 days.
- High in: magnesium and potassium, and also antioxidants, fiber and essential vitamins such as vitamin K, vitamin A, manganese, folate, magnesium, iron, vitamin E, vitamin C, vitamin B2, calcium, potassium, healthy fats, etc.

RECIPES

Almond Milk

Soak ½ cup almonds in a closed container overnight. Rinse the almonds with fresh pure water. Blend the almonds with 2 cups pure water. Sieve the almond milk and fridge in airtight container. The milk stays fresh for 2-3 days. Shake container before use. You can keep and use the pulp for baking.

Alkaline Blueberry Smoothie

INGREDIENTS

1 handful spinach
½ cup frozen blueberries
½ avocado
2 cups almond milk
½ cup of oats
A pinch of vanilla
1 teaspoon hemp seeds (optional)

- Add all ingredients and blend.

Enjoy fresh and cool!

The recipes yield approximately 2 cups.

- Keep the berry smoothie refrigerated in an airtight glass container for a maximum of 1 day.





Tranquility

A Photo Essay
by Sachi Kato

I was exposed to art at an early age, as my father is an artisan potter. That was in Gifu, Japan. He showed me how to make art out of clay when I was a child. I was also inspired by my grandmother, who was a painter; I spent a lot of time watching her paint. Art has always been an essential part of my life.



I love to create a peaceful and healing experience in photographic art – tranquility. My focus is on fine art photography, to infuse a unique aesthetic essence into the photographs. They embody a painterly look. They represent peaceful moments that we vaguely remember, like dreams from our childhood.



The idea of living in harmony is also a strong impulse. The color palette is subtle, as in Japanese art and culture. I like elusive and monochromatic colors so as to unite every object into a single oneness. Appreciating our lives and validating our inner selves brings our lives into harmony ●





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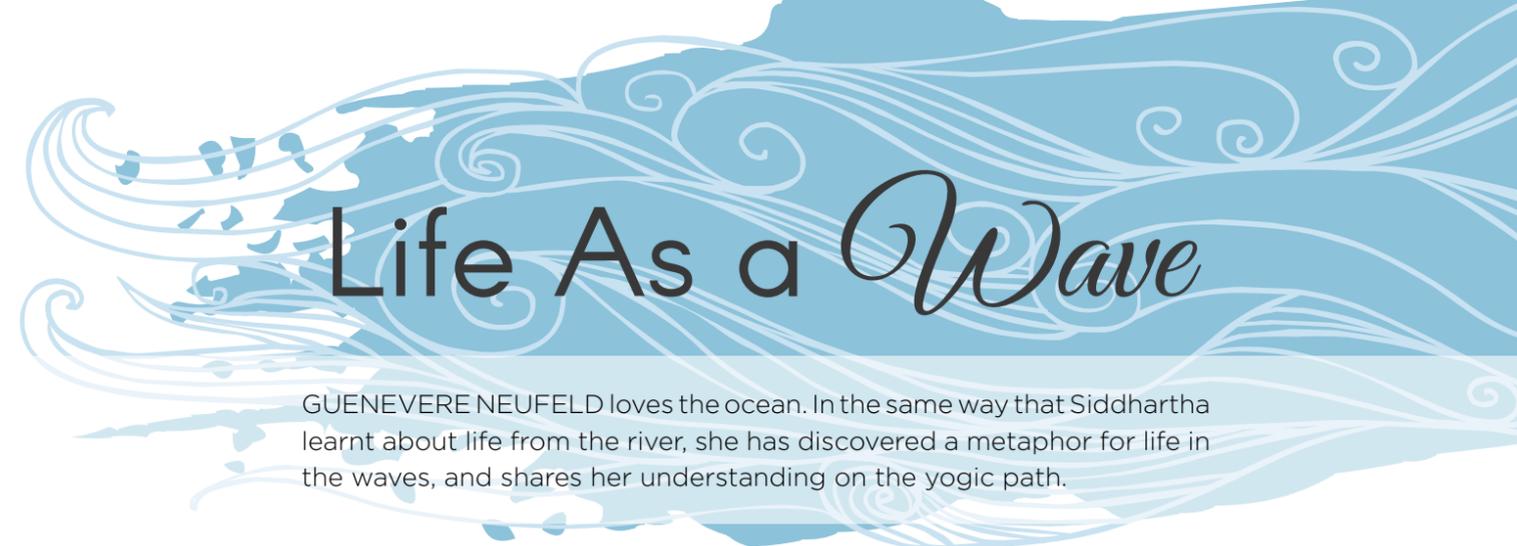
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Life As a Wave

GUENEVERE NEUFELD loves the ocean. In the same way that Siddhartha learnt about life from the river, she has discovered a metaphor for life in the waves, and shares her understanding on the yogic path.

As a teenager I was obsessed with the ocean. I had daydreams of escaping my humdrum life in a small Canadian prairie town and strolling on warm sunset beaches with sand pressing through my toes. I wanted to sit near that swelling mass of wet and raid wave-rippled shores for newly deposited shells as the tide retreated.

As a fresh graduate, I quenched this angst-filled longing with a long sojourn to different shores throughout the Mediterranean. Ocean tides churned and merged like the diversity of the languages, cultures and religions I experienced in my travels.

Back home in Canada, and recently separated, I needed to go on an inner journey. I was led to an ashram where I heard the words of Swami Sivananda Radha:

“The heart symbolizes an ocean of Light and Consciousness.”¹

The tides of the world are turning. Loud crashes of global current events paint a bleak picture for those interested in building bridges. At times the volume of greed, fear and aggression gets too loud for me,

¹ Swami Sivananda Radha, 2007. *Light and Vibration*. Timeless Books, BC, Canada

and I dip up and down, fumbling for the shore, feeling helpless and overwhelmed.

In my young innocence I used to extend my values of understanding and inclusivity to those around me. I assumed the leaders of the world reached their positions because they were truly the best people for the job and would work for the greater good of all people. Recently I was forced to let that fanciful dream fully release.

“When we investigate rhythm, we can see that life is not a straight line, but a wave, with its many ups and downs. But whether up or down, it still has the same life Energy.”

Over the years I have had the opportunity to see how the study of Yoga – its philosophy and, more importantly, its practice – impacts my daily life. Yoga reveals to me that the responsibility for my life is mine alone. It is up to me to direct my own life and live out my ideals. No politician or leader will do it for me.

Through Yoga I understand myself better, and I am able to clarify the kind of person I want to be, independent of the world around me. I understand that life is a wave.

² Swami Sivananda Radha, 2011. *Kundalini: Yoga for the West*. Timeless Books, BC, Canada

In this spirit of awareness, I offer a simple practice of breath awareness, which helps me tune into an inner rhythm and connect with the rhythm of all life.

Try it for yourself:

Sit in a relaxed meditative posture with a straight spine.

Close your eyes, and observe your natural breathing pattern.

Bring your breath to a slow and even rhythm, counting to four as you inhale and counting to four as you exhale. Keep this rhythm of breath flowing evenly for a comfortable amount of time – for about five minutes is good.

When you open your eyes, observe the effects of balanced breath.

Write down your experience so you can remember that, in a few moments, with intentional awareness, you can calm the emotional waves and dive into the ocean of Light that is always there.

“We do not need to convert from one religion to another, but rather we have to convert the darkness held in our Hearts into the Light and vibration of love.” ●

² Swami Sivananda Radha. 2011. *Kundalini: Yoga for the West*. Timeless Books, BC, Canada

When one tugs at a single thing in nature,
he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

JOHN MUIR

Winter *Garden*

ALANDA GREENE lives in British Columbia in Canada, where the winters bring darkness and a quilt of snow over the garden. It's a time of inward rejuvenation and recharging. How does that affect our own inner cycles of busy-ness and stillness?

I'm working at the kitchen table these days instead of upstairs at my desk. It's winter and the house is cold, especially where I usually write. This is my version of a seasonal migration, a tiny replica of the cyclic nomadic journeys that the indigenous peoples of the plains made. When winter's freezing temperatures, wind, snow and ice conspired, they moved to a location that gave shelter from these forces. It just makes sense, both out on the prairie and here in the house. The indigenous peoples moved closer to forested hillsides, out of the wind and with fuel nearby. I move to the warmth of the kitchen, as our firewood is gathered and stacked outside the door.

The garden is outside the window, covered in a thick quilt of white. I glance occasionally to it but feel no call to be there. During spring, summer and fall, I often tell myself a story: when the winter comes there will be so much more time for creative pursuits such as writing. Certainly the time I give to the garden in those other seasons is now available for other activities, but the anticipated expanded space where writing ideas burst forth is as absent as signs of growth outdoors.

During spring, summer and fall, I often tell myself a story: when the winter comes there will be so much more time for creative pursuits such as writing. Certainly the time I give to the garden in those other seasons is now available for other activities, but the anticipated expanded space where writing ideas burst forth is as absent as signs of growth outdoors.



There's an outer cycle to seasons and there's an inner cycle also. They tend to mirror each other, but I often don't acknowledge that my own energy and creativity has seasonal fluctuations. Instead, I berate myself for not being more purposeful now that I have the time, not applying myself with more focus and diligence. I recognize self-accusations, such as "undisciplined, lacking focus, lazy, scattered."

These accusations often function just under the surface, like all the things currently hidden by snow, so it requires listening and reflecting to catch the words that go with the feeling. They are old concepts, cultural and familial ideas that are as outworn as my old garden clogs. Unlike my clogs, they never did serve a useful purpose, but there's a lingering suspicion that without the whip of these criticisms I would not get anything done; nothing would be accomplished or completed.

As I age and give more time to exploring these ideas, I suspect that less is done of importance and a lot is done that is busy-ness without purpose, cleverly disguised as purposeful engagement, because of the sting of these words.

Thoreau wrote, "It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?" He spent much time in stillness, observation, listening and reflecting. They are not activities that fit under the 'busy' column, but they may well fit under 'effective use of time'.



The garden lies quiet and still. It's a time when I imagine the roots of trees and bushes, the filaments of garlic and tulips and crocus, to be quietly recharging, filled with dreaming. This quiet cycle of rest is crucial for their months ahead. This is also true for me. The amazing stillness in the world outside brings a stillness to my own heart and mind.

Occasionally deer walk by and expectantly examine the place I regularly toss apples that froze in the storage room. The pileated woodpecker bangs away on the wooden siding, finding hidden insects, while the grouse do trapeze artist contortions while trying to grasp cherry and plum buds. Watching them is a delight. It's a quiet delight, however, and I'm present to enjoy it because I'm sitting quietly with a cup of tea and just looking.

Yes, there's a voice telling me I could use this time more efficiently and productively. But the woodpecker's steady drumming reminds me that efficiency and productivity are part of a rhythm. For now it is persistent and persevering and determined. For a while. Then it rests in the big

larch tree at the edge of the forest. Rhythms and cycles are everywhere.

I value work and effort, but there's a rhythm to it that includes rest and reflection, a quiet mind and body, recharging. Not only daily, but in yearly turns of the planet. I know that deep in the earth, unseen and unperceived, roots are growing into new territory and quiet roots are absorbing what they need to support the burst of growth that will come in spring. This rhythm of the seasonal cycles reflects the cycle of the earth turning around the sun, the daily spin of light and dark, the seasons of a life.

My own reflective musings, rest and incubation also join the cycles, in a healthy pattern. That pattern is only distorted when the prodding of self-criticism and expectation come into the picture. It's like those times when there's a lovely harmony of sound, when rhythm, cadence and melody support each other. Suddenly something disrupts the rhythm, the notes don't fit, the drumbeat is out of sync, and then the sounds don't blend. It jars the ears. That's

I value work and effort, but there's a rhythm to it that includes rest and reflection, a quiet mind and body, recharging. Not only daily, but in yearly turns of the planet.

what happens when the natural cycle within my own being is not honored.

Soon enough, the spring imperative will arrive. Buds will swell, the birds at the feeder will eat twice their regular number of seeds, the soil will rise in bumps as crocus and scilla push up to the light, and I will feel the urgency to turn the soil and plant seeds and also engage creatively with renewed inspiration. My own energy mirrors the enthusiasm of all the growing things.

When this time arrives, the plains indigenous peoples packed up their lodges and moved. I'll relocate my piles of papers and notebooks upstairs to my desk and think about the time I will have next winter to apply my energy in other creative pursuits, while the garden once again lies dormant. Perhaps I'll laugh at myself and remember that it is better to surrender to the rhythm of the seasons. Perhaps I will ignore the tedious phrases that prod me to do otherwise, and instead give more respectful time to what the season asks for – stillness and rejuvenation ●

The Three Brothers

PART 2:

Jack's Golden Words



A Brotherly Reunion

Then long years had elapsed since Danny had left them. At long last the three brothers met again in Montpellier. They all wept for joy as they hugged affectionately. They looked so different now. Polo was just eighteen and his little dog had become a superb tawny-coated dog. Jack was twenty and lived in the USA, having been given shelter at an old aunt's. Dan was twenty-two and very tall.

As the three brothers sat in an open-air café, in the generous shade of the big lime tree, Polo told them about his love story with his dog.

"What a beautiful story!" Dan exclaimed, his eyes shining with tears.

Now Polo and Dan looked forward to hearing Jack's story.

"What happened to you Jack? How is it that you can speak so well and with such remarkable ease?"



So Jack told them. "After you left, Danny, I prayed a lot. Every day after school, I would ride my old bike and go to the village church in Serverette. There, I would collect my thoughts and meditate in front of the statue of the Black Madonna who inspired so much love. I would beg her to illuminate my path.

"When I was there at the feet of the Madonna, I could feel our mother's love. My heart would open up, sometimes to the extent of bursting with love, with a pain in my chest. I had the feeling that my heart could greet the whole universe, and I wished I could share it. But how could I?"



“One evening, as I was praying in front of the Madonna, a sweet voice whispered to me, ‘Human beings have to be told about love. Come here. Climb the pedestal, kiss my lips, and your speech will be released.’

I was so shocked and scared that I ran away. Kissing the Madonna is just not done. The sisters used to say that the statue is sacred and must not be touched. So I rode back home furiously. I was distressed and I began to doubt. Maybe I had imagined it, or was it only my wishful thinking? I wanted so much to be like everyone else. But kissing on the mouth – that would be shameful!

“I did not dare mention the incident to anyone, but in class I kept thinking about it. However hard I tried to concentrate, it was to no avail, as I kept remembering the Madonna’s words which dragged me into a whirlwind.

“I was so afraid that I would cling to anything, to anyone, to any word that could make me forget. The more I clung, the more I would sink. So I shut myself in my bedroom and prayed over and over again. And the more I prayed, the more I could see myself praying, and the deeper I sank.



“Then I decided to let it be. If I had to drown, well, I’d drown and never mind. At that very moment something incredible happened. The ball in my chest that was smothering me suddenly went away by itself. I was not sinking after all; I was staying afloat. I even managed to go to the refectory without the fear of whispers. It was like ‘calm out of chaos’. Well, I could still feel some tiny balls in my chest and deep in my throat, but I felt much better. I could listen to my heart.

“What if the Madonna really had been talking to me? What if my mother was speaking through the Madonna? Or was it a wise voice rising from the bottom of my heart? I wondered – what if it was the most important thing, after all?

“Deep within myself I was sure I had to be bold and do something. Then I remembered the way my heart would sometimes burst within my chest.”



The Secret Lies Deep Within Us



Jack saw that both Polo and Danny were listening with rapt attention, so he continued: “I asked my heart and waited for an answer. When no answer came immediately I asked again, every day at the same hour, waiting for that answer. Seven days later I felt a power within me, pushing me ahead: ‘Go and kiss her. Drop all your prejudices. Listen to your heart!’

“I got on my bike and flew to the chapel. On entering, I saw that nobody else was there and it was very calm and dark within. ‘Don’t think,’ I said to myself. My body was shaking all over again and I was losing heart, as I knelt before Mary’s statue and tried to pray. I felt so small, so insignificant. ‘What am I doing here?’ I asked myself.

"I stayed there for a long time, motionless, thinking I was a tiny thing. I could not feel anything any more. My head was empty, and so was my heart. Anxiously I looked at the Madonna. A soft love vibration entered my heart. It was quite warm and I felt happier. I had no more questions.

"I was going to leave when the Presence, the voice within me, again said, 'Kiss her.' So I climbed on a chair to reach the pedestal, ready to commit the forbidden. I was doing it out of love and nothing could stop me anymore. Suddenly I felt a powerful breath stroke the top of my head, filling it up. My mouth and throat were on fire. A wave of warmth went through my chest and heart. Then it calmed down, and my chest seemed to be full of a very light breeze, as if a cloudless sky had settled there.

"Stunned, I climbed down and sat on the chair. Within me was strength and lightness, and it was an unknown experience. I felt so happy, as if something I knew had been restored within me.

"Feeling transported by a new energy, I rode my bike back home. In the corridor I met my friend Jules, who asked me, 'What happened to you Jack? You look as bright as a Christmas tree!' Excitedly I told him all about the experience I had just had. Another friend who was there sat down and listened, too. Then another one joined us, and another, and so on.

"Then I told them Master Suzuki's story of the little fish.¹



¹ Master Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki told this story to his disciple Alan Watts.

The Little Fish in the Vast Ocean

"Once a little fish was swimming in the vast ocean, when suddenly a strange idea crossed its mind: 'How is it that I can float and swim on the surface of the water?' So it began to observe and analyze: 'It is incredible the way these fins can work independently of the body. And all these little movements are so well-articulated.' Thus it studied each and every wave-motion of its body, its tail and its gills.

"What surprised it most was the feeling of the fathomless vacuum underneath, so it said: 'I can't understand how I don't sink to the bottom of the

ocean.' Thereafter, every time it looked down and saw the deep water, the little fish would feel dizzy. To fight that dizziness, it started to frantically move its fins and make its body undulate furiously. 'Gosh, I'm sinking. Oh dear, I am sinking. I'm so afraid. I can't move my fins any more. Help! I'm drowning. I can't breathe. Help!' Indeed, it sank straight to the bottom.

"Suddenly, a deep voice from the depths of the ocean was heard saying to the little fish: 'You are a fish so you cannot drown. You are perfect for swimming. So swim, and don't ask any questions!'



“At the end of the story, my classmates exclaimed, ‘Jack, what happened to your stammer? It’s gone!’ While I was making them dream, I had not even realized that I was no longer stammering. It was magic.

“The following day I went again to the chapel and thanked the Madonna. As I expressed my gratitude with all my heart, I heard the voice whispering again. ‘Your love has allowed God to be present within you, and your faith has cured you. God is always within us. Just celebrate love and faith, and warm other people’s hearts with the speech God has released within you.’

“That is why I no longer stammer today, and I can now tell stories. But it’s time to go to Serverette and see Sister Marie Madeleine.”

To be continued ... ●



STORY BY PAPIGUY OF MONTPELLIER
ILLUSTRATIONS BY JULIETTE ALAY

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Decorative Leaves



Right now it is springtime in the northern hemisphere and autumn in the southern hemisphere. In the south, the leaves are changing color and falling from many of the trees, as the days get shorter and the evenings cooler.

So it is the perfect time to collect these beautiful colored leaves and press them in an old book for at least a week, so that they are flat and ready to be decorated.

Once the leaves are ready, here is one activity that you can invite your friends to do with you.



Maybe you will also be inspired to write a poem or a story on one of your leaves ●

Take leaves of all shapes and sizes that have been pressed.



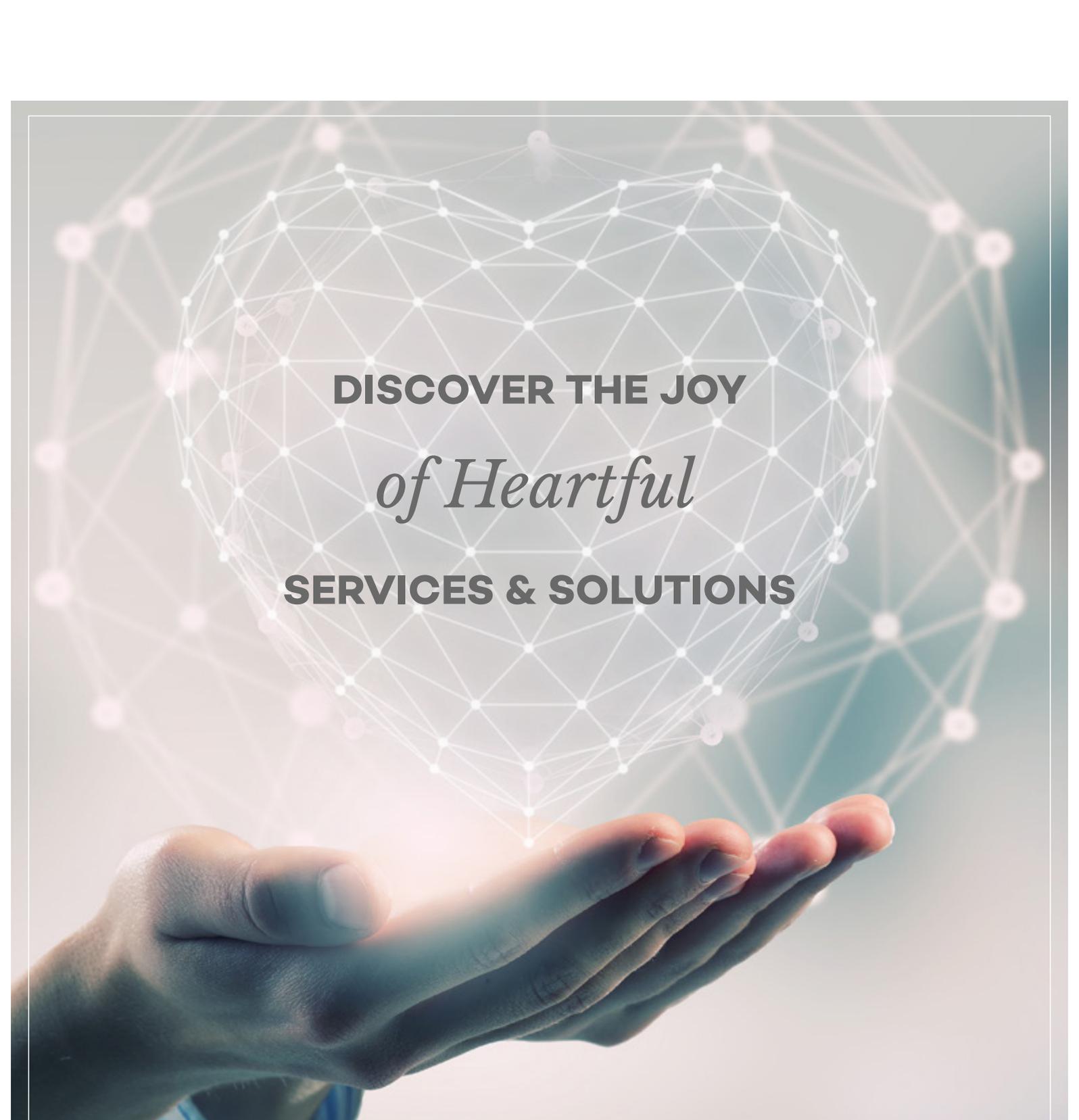
Then use Uni-Posca markers or other marker pens to create designs and images on the leaves in different colors and sizes



Have fun!



PHOTOS AND TEXT BY ANNE-GRETHE KOUSGAARD
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