

June 2020

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

Raising
consciousness,
an exclusive
interview with
BRUCE LIPTON

From tolerance
to appreciation
MARILYN
TURKOVICH


Transforming
awareness
PETER REDING

*Being your
authentic self*

DAAJI

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BEING YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Dear readers,

As we move into the 8th month since corona first struck, many of us are now asking, “What next?” How do we emerge in a better way from this crisis? What have we learnt from our time of self-reflection? What changes will we make to take us forward, so that we don’t drift back into obsolete ways?

To inspire us to open up to new horizons, in this edition we look at consciousness raising approaches. We hear from Daaji, Bruce Lipton, Ichak Adizes, Marilyn Turkovich, Peter Reding, and more. All our authors approach the topic from different angles, offer different skills, and challenge us to rise above our current preconceptions, so that we can manifest a better world and become more and more authentic.

We are at a time in history where our individual and collective choices matter a lot. And in the words of Nelson Mandela, “May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”

Happy reading,
The editors

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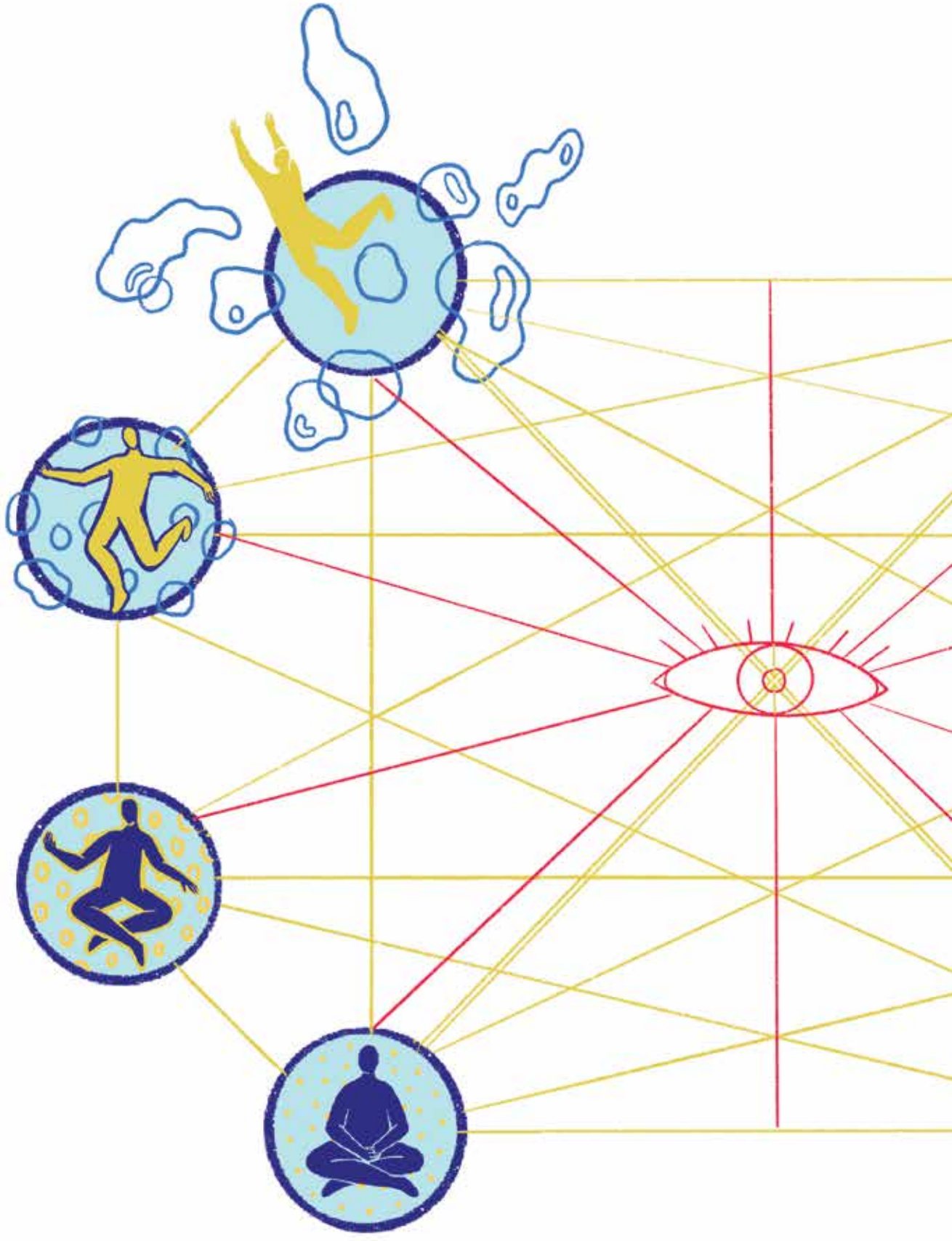
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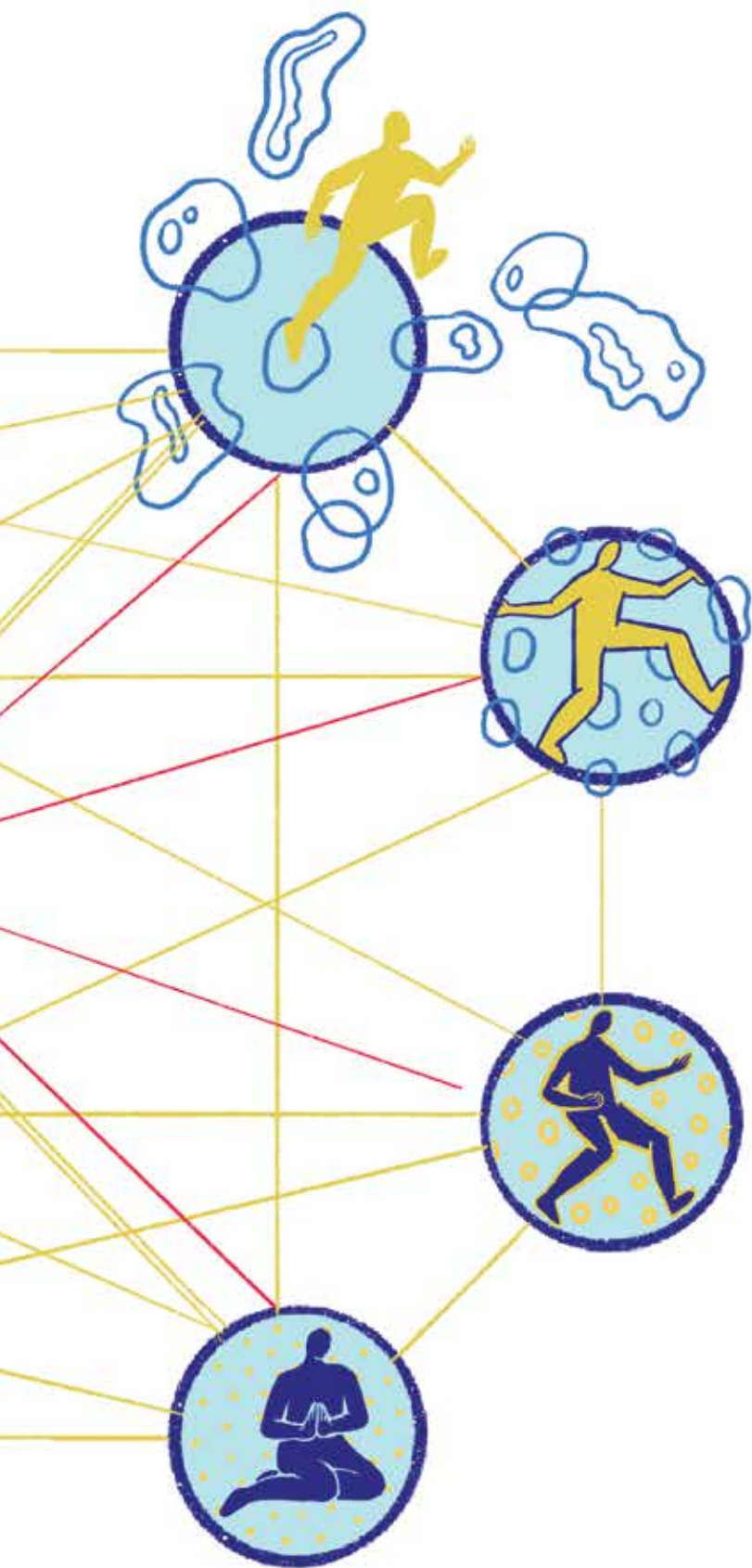
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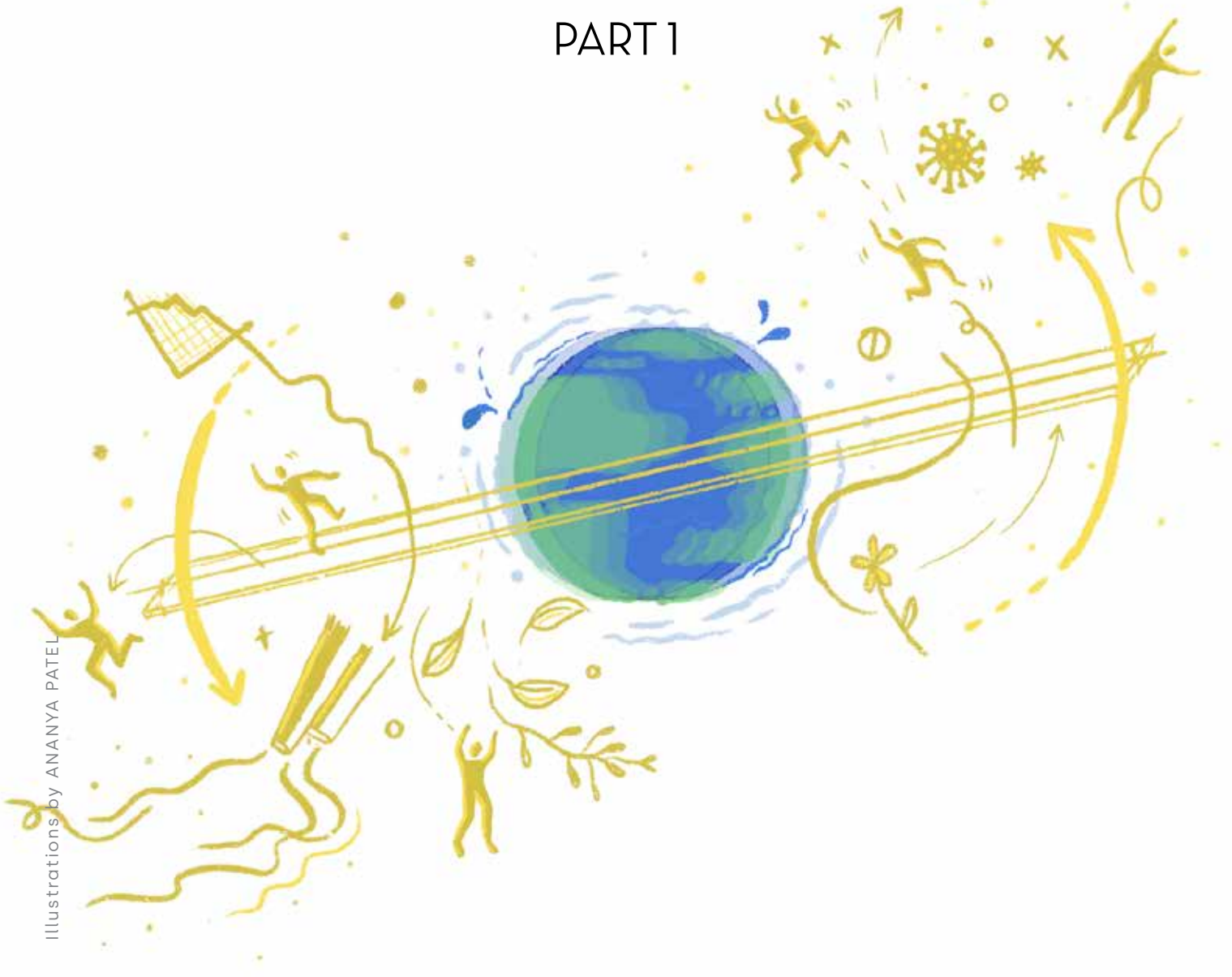
RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS

You are pure
consciousness itself,
the eternal Witness,
and free.

ASHTAVAKRA

Raising CONSCIOUSNESS

PART 1



In April 2020, **BRUCE LIPTON**, who was in New Zealand at the time, spoke to **UDAY KUMAR** about the transition our planet is going through right now, and what we need to do to raise our consciousness to the next level. This is the first of 3 parts of this inspiring exclusive interview.

(After some initial chit chat)

Do you have lockdown where you are?

Q: Yes, it's been quite interesting to see how the best and worst of human nature comes out at these times.

You know, between us, there's more to this than just a 'flu scare.

Q: I would love to know more. What are your thoughts, because these are unprecedented times, at least during my limited lifespan?

Well, in 75 years, this is one of the most interesting events I have also experienced. And it really relates to a bigger topic than just the 'flu. It relates to the scientific reality that we're in the 6th mass extinction of life. Just briefly, 5 times life was thriving on this planet when some kind of cataclysmic event – boom! – almost instantaneously wiped out about 90% of life. Then, evolution essentially started all over again.

So far we've had 5 waves, the last mass extinction being, I think, 66 million years ago when the dinosaurs were here, and the world was lush tropics and jungles. Back then, a comet hit near Mexico, the Yucatan Peninsula, and it was such a big comet that it upended the environment. That's when the dinosaurs were wiped out, and life was pretty much decimated, and then it started all over again. So, it has been 66 million years since the last one. By definition, a mass extinction event is when between 70% to 90% of life disappears, and this has happened 5 times before this era.

We are now in the 6th mass extinction. Just to give you an idea, the World Wildlife Foundation did a survey of how many animals there were on this planet in 1970, and they did a similar survey about a year and a half ago and found that 63% of the entire animal population has disappeared since 1970! Since 1950, 90% of the fish population in the ocean has gone, so we only have 10% of the fish left on the planet. Scientists recognize that by 2048 there'll be

no fish in the ocean, because of overfishing, polluting the oceans, and destroying breeding grounds.

What am I getting to? The 6th mass extinction – we've already lost massive populations. Species are going extinct very quickly now. And the reason it's relevant to us at this moment is because scientists have recognized that human behavior is causing this extinction. This is not extinction 1000 years from now; we're talking of extinction within a century.

Q: The pace of extinction that you're talking about, the rate of decline, seems to be more intense than the previous one that happened in the Yucatan.

Well, yes, it's working that fast. It's going so fast that it surprises even the scientists! So, we're in a mass extinction, and we humans are causing the mass extinction, and if we want to survive as a civilization then, by definition, we have to change our behavior on the planet. We have to rebuild our understanding of civilization.

Since human behavior is causing the imbalance, then it's only human behavior that we have to focus on.

Back in time, in Hindu and Buddhist traditions, there was an understanding of a world in harmony, in a garden, and this is what we have to go back to, because we have destroyed the environment around us. We think we can do anything. No! We can't keep pillaging the Earth, and taking stuff out of it, thinking there's more to come. We've reached that stage. We're in it right now, the global crisis. It's not the virus – that's just a symptom. Let me try to give an analogy: When you look at a picture of trees – here's one tree, and here's another tree, but if you pull far enough back, it's a forest. All crises, whether they are racial, religious, economic, political, or of disease, are symptoms of a world out of balance.

So, what are we going to do about it? The answer is this: Since human behavior is causing the imbalance,

then it's only human behavior that we have to focus on.

Here is a very interesting fact: In Fukushima and Chernobyl, where nuclear disasters happened, there are areas around the sites which they call exclusion zones, meaning no people are allowed. And recently, there was a wonderful video on Planet Earth, in which they showed pictures of Chernobyl. It's turned into a forest, there's nobody there, trees are growing in buildings, on buildings, everything's covered in vines. But the most important part of both Chernobyl and Fukushima is that there's more wildlife and nature in the exclusion zones than anywhere around them.

Q: Earlier today, I was looking at some videos on Facebook and I discovered that during the last 4 weeks the water in the River Ganges near Rishikesh has become fit for drinking again. So many organizations have been working to clean the Ganges, for I don't know how long ... and after 4 weeks of shutdown.

I have friends who live in Sacramento, California, and they say the air there is the cleanest and clearest they've seen it in 30 years, because no one is driving. It's a big center, it's the capital and it's polluted, although not like Delhi, which scares me. But I saw a picture of Delhi just yesterday, and it looked clear like I've never seen it. I was there several months

ago when it was hazy and smoggy, like it always is, especially when you come in at night, but in this picture the sky was crystal clear blue, which hasn't been the case in many years. So, there's something to learn here.

Q: But how do we unwind this? What you're talking about is very crucial. You're talking about regaining wisdom.

Yes! Wisdom is always a natural event. Given the opportunity, people wouldn't be doing what they're doing. They would live in a very different way if given the choice. The programming – that's the word – the programming is destructive.

When I give a lecture, I talk about the movie, *The Matrix*, and I say it's not science fiction, it's a documentary. Why? Because everyone has been programmed. It's natural, the reason why is simply this: I go to the computer store, I buy a computer with a brand new operating system, I go home, turn it on, it boots up, and I say, "Great!" Now I say, "Do something! Draw, write, make a spreadsheet." It can't. I say, "Why not?" Because I don't have any programs. I've got a computer, and it's working, but I don't have any programs, and without them I cannot use the computer. So, first you get the operating system, then you put in the programs, and then you can use the computer.

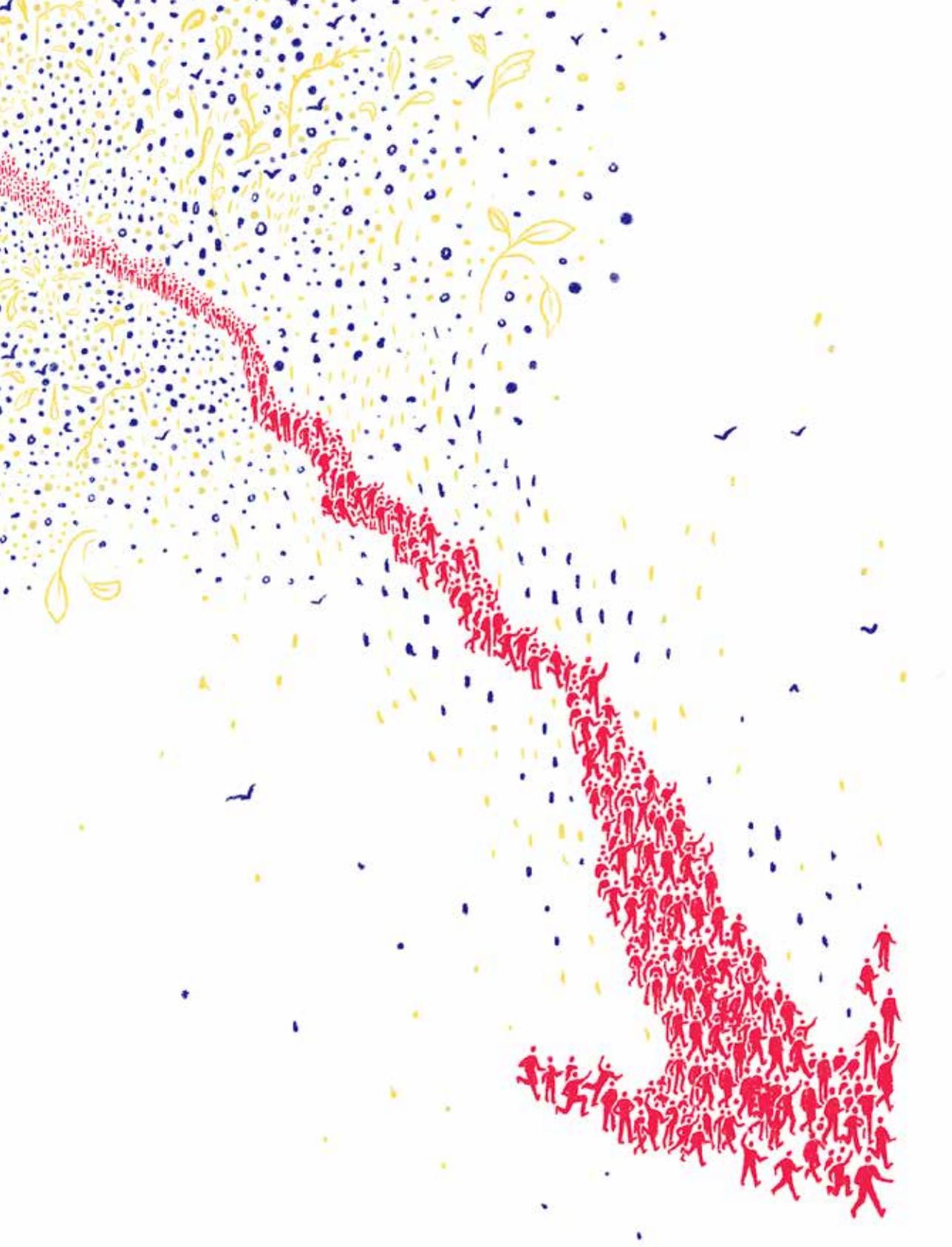


A baby's brain gets the operating system in about the last trimester of pregnancy; the brain is beginning to operate in the last 3 months in the womb. What kind of a brain? Well, you can do anything, because it has no programs. When you take an EEG of a person, the brain shows all different levels of vibration: alpha vibration is calm consciousness, the higher one is called beta, and the even higher one is gamma, which is peak performance. But below alpha is theta and the bottom one is delta, sleep. So, between sleep and consciousness there's a space, and in that space

runs theta. Theta is characterized in behavior as imagination. So, kids have a tea party, and they pour nothing into the cup, and drink nothing, and talk about how wonderful the tea was. They ride a broom and it's a horse, when they're riding it, in their mind it's not a broom it's a horse. So, I say, "Ah, theta, imagination, that's what it does!" But theta is hypnosis.

Why is it relevant? Well, how many rules do we have to know to be a member of a family and a member of a community? There are thousands of rules. How a

father talks to his own child is not how that same father talks to the neighbor's child. It's not how he talks to his wife or how he talks to the neighbor. It's not how he talks to the policeman. Every one of them is a learned, programmed behavior, to conform. Can you teach an infant these rules? The answer is no, you can't do it, it's not possible. The book would be so thick, and are you going to read this book to the infant? So, guess what? Nature already planned on that. Nature says, we'll put the brain in hypnosis. So you watch. You watch your mother, you watch your father, you watch your family,



the neighborhood. You observe their behavior in theta, which is hypnosis, so, you download programs on how to behave.

Where do you get these programs? Other people. And when you were getting these programs, did you have the consciousness to filter out a good program from a bad one? No, consciousness didn't even kick in. You just recorded word for word, picture for picture, what you experienced. So, here's the problem: Most of us have such bad programming. It's estimated that 70% of the programming is disempowering, self-sabotaging and limiting beliefs. And it's just the way your parents behaved; you downloaded it. You had no filter. You didn't pick the good from the bad. You downloaded all of the programs.

It is not until the age of 7 that consciousness kicks in. Before that, just like on the computer, our lives follow the program, and in the science that I have been involved with, most people on this planet have been programmed to believe that their lives are controlled by genes.

So I ask people, "What is the meaning of that program?"
 "Genes turn on and off, they express our life."
 So I ask, "Did you pick the genes you came with?"
 "No."

"Can you change the genes if you don't like the characters?"

"No."

"And the genes turn on and off?"

"Yes, that's what I'm told."

So, I ask, "What is the meaning of that program? You're a victim of your heredity."

Why is that important? Because the moment you cop "victim," you say, "I have no power." That's what victim is – no power! So, you give up power, with the perception that you are a victim of your biology. And when it comes to health? You say, "Cancer. What the hell do I know about cancer. Genes cause cancer, I'm a victim, I need a healer."

So, then I come with modern science, and say, "There's not one gene that causes cancer, not one. Genes are correlated with cancer, but they do not cause cancer. Take the example of an actress who found out she had the BRCA1 breast cancer gene, and because her mother and grandmother both died of breast cancer she decided she didn't want to also die from it. And the reasoning was: If you have a double mastectomy and remove your breasts then you won't get breast cancer. But this is a false understanding, because the same cancer gene affects the uterus and the ovaries, so, you can get ovarian cancer. The point is this: She had her breasts removed. Why? Because of the belief system that the genes are going to cause

it – I can't do anything about it, so I need to get rid of the gene, and I need the doctor to cut out the cells and throw them away. And here's the thing: 50% of women who carry the BRCA1 gene never get cancer. The meaning is clear – having the gene doesn't cause cancer. It's living a lifestyle that is not supportive of harmony and health that causes the gene to come into play in a system that is falling apart, essentially.

Why is this relevant? This belief caused a woman to have a double mastectomy because she said, "I'm not in control; my genes are controlling my life," whereas the research I did in 1967, 53 years ago, showed that it's environment that controls genes. A human body is made up of 50 trillion cells. A body is a community, so, when I say "Bruce," it's not just one entity, it's a community. You are a community of 50 trillion cells. Your name is the name of a community. And every day, hundreds of billions of cells die. It's natural – skin cells are coming off, the entire digestive lining is replaced every 3 days, and that's a trillion cells! So, how long do you think you can live? Not very long because after a few days things are going to fall apart and things won't work anymore. And yet we do still live.

Well, anybody who's alive is alive because, in addition to their body cells, they have stem cells. A stem



cell is an embryonic cell from before you were born. The moment you're born, the embryonic cells are renamed as stem cells, so, it's the same thing. And a stem cell has a multi potential to become anything; stem cells can replace anything. I isolated one stem cell, and put it in a dish; isolating a stem cell is called cloning because when the cell divides it's genetically identical to its parent.

Q: You were doing stem cell research as far back as 1967? I don't think it was called stem cell research back then!

Do you know why? Because there were maybe only a handful of people who understood stem cells back in 1967. I happened to be working in the lab of a man who was one of the first people to clone stem cells. And cloning means

that you put one cell in a dish, it divides every 10 hours or so, so that by the end of the week there are 30,000 cells in a petri dish. The most important point of cloning is that all 30,000 cells came from one parent, so, they're all genetically identical cells.

I split them into 3 petri dishes, so that there were genetically identical cells in each petri dish,

What controlled the fate of the cells? It wasn't the genes. They all had the same genes. The thing that was different was the chemistry of the environment; the genetics of the cells were controlled not by the genes but by the environment.

but I changed the chemistry of the culture medium in which the cells grew. And bear with me, because I'm going to come into a circle here, and make a story. So, what is culture medium? It's the laboratory version of blood. If I grow human cells, what's the culture medium based on? Human blood. If I grow mouse cells, I use a culture medium based on mouse chemistry.

So, here, since I'd made the culture medium based on blood, I could change the chemical composition a little bit in each petri dish by making 3 slightly different culture mediums. The cells grew in the culture medium, and that is called the "environment." So, I had 3 dishes with genetically identical cells in 3 different environments. In one dish, environment A, the cells formed muscle, in environment B the cells formed bone, and in the third dish, environment C, the cells form fat cells.

I was teaching at that time – and the curriculum said that genes control life, that's the way it is. And yet, my research was showing me that, while they all had the same genes, one became muscle, another bone, and yet another fat? What controlled the fate of the cells? It wasn't the genes. They all had the same genes. The thing that was different was the chemistry of the environment; the genetics of

the cells were controlled not by the genes but by the environment.

Q: And that was part of the experiment?

That was the result of the experiment. I was teaching in a classroom that genes control life, but in the laboratory I was discovering that it's the environment. I was radical, I was too weird.

My colleagues and associates were so into genes that, when I showed them my work, they said, "Aargh, it's not important."

The most important part of science is reproducibility and predictability, so I said, "You come in today, and I'm going to put one cell in the petri dish and when I come back there will be 30,000 genetically identical cells. And then I'm going to change the culture medium of each dish and then I'm going to show you the fate of the cells. Why is this relevant? Because I can predict it before it happens, and that is the hallmark of science – predictability."

But, it wasn't where people were at. Genes were the goldmine of everything, and I wasn't talking about genes.

To be continued.

Outcomes of Qualities

SANTOSH KHANJEE



Selfish, folly

Selfless, rewarding

Wisdom, transforms

Unity, transcends

Anonymity, shines

Harmony, comforts

Prayer, vibrates

Grace, fills

Pranahuti, changes

Love, melts

Compassion, heals

Arrogance, destroys

Sacrifice, uplifts

Respect, reciprocates

Gratitude, nourishes

Hope, lifts

Anger, destroys

Pride, separates

Humility, connects

Division, destroys

Oneness, Realization



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F1 FLEXIBLE ARRAY
LOUDSPEAKER SYSTEM





thought in action

I'm a very positive
thinker, and
I think that is
what helps me
the most in
difficult moments.

ROGER FEDERER

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTENANCE IN YOUR LIFE

DR. ICHAK ADIZES shares some thoughts on maintenance and how to make the most of the current corona crisis to prepare the foundation for the future.



In the 1970s I was consulting for the US Agency for International Development on health planning in Ghana. One of the major issues was that a lot of the hospital equipment was not working. Costly equipment donated by well-meaning philanthropic organizations from Europe and the US was abandoned in the corridors unused. When I asked my hosts why, they said, "Oh, it broke down." Why did it break down? There was either *no* maintenance or *bad* maintenance.

As I travel the world, I stay in hotels. I was once in a beautiful hotel in a developing country. But the bath did not work, the toilet did not work, and not all of the lighting did work. They spent a lot of money building this hotel, so what went wrong? Maintenance.

It is not enough to invest, build, and develop. You still have to maintain what you developed, built, or invested in. The same thing would be true for your garden or car.

While we are accustomed to performing maintenance on cars, buildings, gardens and machines, it is practically non-existent when it comes to human relations. As one of my clients said, "One honeymoon is not enough for a lifetime of marriage." Love needs to be maintained. A wonderful wedding and newlywed love are not enough. That's a great "investment," but what about maintenance? What do you do to maintain love? Do you go on an annual honeymoon? How much time do you spend just the two of you? Loving.



Do we maintain our own health? Some of us go to the doctor for an annual check-up. Is that all? What do *you* do to maintain your health?

You're building, managing, leading a company. That organization in which you have invested so much energy and money, are you maintaining it? Or is it falling apart right before your eyes? Why is it falling apart? Well, why did your car fall apart? Why did the life-saving equipment in the Ghanaian hospital fall apart? Lack of maintenance.

You need to do an annual check-up of your organization, like you would of a car or plane, so that it doesn't fall apart. Everything needs a periodic check-up: What's working, what's not working, and what can we do about it? Don't wait until the system breaks down to make a diagnosis. Put in your calendar: on this date, every year, we're going to have a company check-up. Not just an accounting audit. A managerial, organizational audit of the processes by which we manage the company. Now, during the coronavirus crisis, when no one works or buys, is the perfect time to do this maintenance, repair what is broken in your company and come out of the crisis stronger as a company than how you came into the crisis.

Following the diagnosis, have a plan for maintenance. What do you have to fix? Do you have to redo your mission? Do you need to redesign your company's outdated structure? Maybe you need to realign your budgeting system. Maybe your rewards system needs improvement.

Everything needs maintenance. With time and change, all systems start falling apart, be it your garden, car, self, family, or organization.

The more accelerated the rate of change, the more frequent should the maintenance be. It is not good enough to focus only on strategic planning, new products, tactical alliances. They are all needed but don't fall victim to the space syndrome: Expanding on the margins, collapsing at the core.

Maintain the organization, because if it is maintained *well*, it will be healthy. If it is healthy, it will be sustainably successful.

Just thinking,
Dr. Ichak Kalderon Adizes

THE HEARTFUL STRATEGIST

PART 4

In the last three articles of this series, **RAVI VENKATESAN** introduced the Heartful Strategist framework and walked through factors that limit our consciousness versus allowing it to expand. He explored the vicious and virtuous cycles of emotions that we struggle with, and also looked at how developing positive qualities of the heart and finding the right balance between opposites is the key to this expansion of consciousness. In this article we'll dive deeper into how the same person at different stages in life seems to have made very different choices. We'll explore what is behind the shift and what lessons we can draw from it.

Let's take an example of choices made by one person at different stages in their life. Bill Gates is the founder of Microsoft, and is well known as one of the best business strategists. In his younger days he developed the reputation for being brilliant, but ruthless. Some of his brilliant strategic decisions included moving aggressively to become the operating system provider for IBM in the '80s, with a non-exclusive agreement that allowed Microsoft to sell the operating system to other PC manufacturers. There was a dark side, though; his co-founder Paul Allen describes Gates as a ruthless schemer, in his memoirs, who demeaned employees and schemed to reduce his co-founder's share in the company.

There are many other stories about how he stifled competition for Windows, to the extent that initially when the open source software movement came about, Gates and Microsoft were considered everything that this community was fighting against. So, what was the consequence? For years Microsoft Windows, and Microsoft Office became the default computing environment for everyone, blocking innovation that could have come from many sources.

Fast forward to recent years, Gates is one of the most renowned philanthropists and his foundation has tackled some of the most challenging problems in the world. He has also been an influential figure in convincing other billionaires to make generous



contributions. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he is making a real difference to humanity at a global scale.

What changed? Some might argue that he got wiser as he got older, but there are plenty of examples of people staying ruthless, holding on to power, chasing money, well into their later years. Some say it was his marriage to Melinda Gates that brought a very different perspective to him. There is some truth to this if we study when his approach started changing. What was the real shift though?

In the last article we talked about opposite qualities of the heart and how they put us into circles of vicious and virtuous cycles. When we

study an example like Bill Gates, we can see these operating. His early years had plenty of episodes where the drivers seemed to be Greed \Rightarrow Restlessness \Rightarrow Anger \Rightarrow Fear etc. His recent years have plenty of episodes where the drivers are the opposite. This can naturally happen when we open our hearts and listen to what signals we receive from within. However, is there a less abstract way to understand this and act on it? There is. And based on how it is applied, a seemingly negative quality can become positive and vice versa.

Envision your circle of influence. It includes you, your family, your friends, your colleagues, your community and all of humanity (See figure below).



Circle of Influence



Let's now take those opposites that are qualities of the Heart. We can start with seemingly negative qualities like greed or desire. If you take desire, and apply it outwards – desiring more for your family instead of yourself, desiring more for your friends and colleagues – and you keep going till your desire is “wanting more for humanity,” this is now no longer a negative quality.

Similarly, let's take the other qualities one by one and apply the same approach:

Restlessness – be restless for improving the lot of humanity;

Anger – Be angry at all the unfairness and injustice in this world and use it as a constructive force to drive improvements; and

Fear– Use fear to be cautious to protect the interests of others.

Try to apply these ideas consciously over the next few weeks and see if they can shift your consciousness, your choices, the consequences, and the outcomes for your circle of influence.

The Key to Better Connections

KARISHAM KARA

I was fourteen when my mother left me at boarding school in India. I'm from South Africa and I was so far away from home. I made friends, and school was fun, but one of the things I missed most about home was my mom's cooking. Not because hostel food was bad (I actually enjoyed it), but because there is something magical and comforting about your mom's food that you tend to miss when you're so far from home. I don't know if I expressed this to my friends, but one day a friend of mine offered me her lunch that her mom had made for her.

"What are you going to eat then?" I asked. She just smiled, shrugged and said, "Don't worry."

I spent two years with this friend at school, and almost every day she would hand me her lunchbox, and go to the school dining hall for her own lunch (which, might I add, was a difficult task because she wasn't really allowed to be eating there). She didn't have to give me her lunch, especially because I had nothing to offer her in return. Her mom's food was too divine to be giving up, but she always did.

This memory got me thinking about the role that food, generosity, and bonding all have in our lives. Do we feel like offering food to someone we don't like? No, right? How about when we have a crush on someone? We usually ask them out to come and eat with us. In times of crisis, the constant that most of us have in our lives is having dinner with the family, be it at the same table or over video

call. When we love someone, we always ask, "Have you eaten?" So, in my mind, the ultimate form of generosity is sharing food, because food is what we all bond over.

So how can we cultivate a generous heart? Start by bonding with someone you don't like over food. Open your heart and share what you have. You'll see the bond form so fast and your own heart will grow. I speak from experience, because when I think back to this time in school, the strongest bonds I created were with those people with whom I shared food. Sharing food is an act of the heart, especially when you're in a hostel and you have the urge to save all the yummy things to snack on at night when everyone is sleeping! But in our hostel, that's not how it worked. We all opened up and generously shared what we had. In the process, we opened our hearts more and became generous in other ways in our relationships. It was a gateway to accepting people the way they are: listening to their stories, viewpoints, and hardships; laughing and crying with them; and truly understanding them, their needs, wants and dreams.

If this were the mentality in our everyday world, imagine how much closer we'd all be! In today's world there is such a lack of vulnerability and openness in our relationships. We don't communicate properly and enough. Generosity of the heart is that key to better connections, and sharing food is one key to becoming more generous.



LOVE AND GENEROSITY

RATHNAM PARTHASARATHI

According to Google, the definition of generosity of the heart is, “One of the ways we come into balance and connection with each other; life is by giving from the heart. When we give to others, whether it’s an act of kindness, generosity, or compassion, it helps us live from the heart instead of the ego.” If you perform an action from the heart, whether it’s something as small as giving the last cookie to your younger sister, or as big as donating one million dollars to COVID-19 relief funds, it is because of generosity of the heart. If we take it a step further, we can even call it love.

The idea of love seems like a very twisted concept nowadays, but it is actually quite simple. When you really give generously from the heart, it’s because of the love you have for other human beings. It doesn’t matter if you just met them, or if they are a blood relative, or if you’re in a relationship with them. On a fundamental level, it is due to the love you have for them; that’s where the idea of generosity stems from.

I distinctly remember a childhood memory, which is spoken about by my dad even to this day. At the age of three, I had been suffering from severe fever for about two days, and no amount of medicine or time seemed to help. It was only after my mother stayed up for two days without rest or food, sick from worry, did I finally begin to heal. Today, as I ruminate over this event, I feel like I was healed because of her sheer willpower. She refused to

let anything happen to me, and her will and love healed me.

Generosity allows your heart to open up to love, compassion, and other positive emotions that allow humans to experience their true self. As is often said, “Generosity is a practical expression of love.”



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HENRY DAVID THOREAU

From Tolerance to Appreciation

MARILYN TURKOVICH is the current Executive Director of the Charter for Compassion, which provides an umbrella for people to engage in collaborative partnerships worldwide. In December 2019, she spoke with **MEGHANA ANAND** about the organization, its partners, and the work done through the Charter in different countries. Marilyn is an educationist-author and writes about world religions and cultures, bringing out their diverse and uniting threads.



Q: How did it all begin, your work with the Charter for Compassion?

Well, I think it all started when I was a child from a hyphenated American family, in this case Croatian-American. I grew up in an immigrant neighborhood and experienced diversity first hand, through friendships and neighbors, and that kind of sparked how I felt about the world and the people in it. And that look of diversity continued, even when I went to college. The beginning part of my life was in Pennsylvania, in the eastern, middle Atlantic region of the US, and then I went to college in the South and experienced a whole other group of people. And to a certain extent I marched into a new part of history, because Martin Luther King at that time was really centered on his work in the South and was involved in programs in the Kentucky area where I too was involved. So, that's how it all started.

I went into education and went to Chicago, which was the hotbed of the Civil Rights Movement in the in the north at the time. As a matter of fact, MLK moved to Chicago for a while, so I got very involved with that. Maybe it was serendipitous, but there was also a bit of madness and planning attached to it as well.

Q: You have written a lot of educational content, books, curricula. Would you like to talk about that part of your work?

I feel that I have two homes other than the United States. One is India, because I received a Fulbright-Hayes Scholarship early in my teaching career and found myself traveling through India and working on a book with two colleagues. We looked at the creations of India, so I got an incredible exposure to the people, the languages, the religions, certainly the arts and crafts, and the history. Somewhere along the line, I wrote another book with a colleague on the cotton industry in India, as kind of a supplement to education, to

Understanding time, and space, and culture, is extremely important to really delve into the perspectives that other people hold, to begin a dialogue, and to understand people who are different from yourself.

make the US Civil War understandable from a whole new perspective.

That was very important to me, and I've been back to India almost every year since, with different projects. I feel very much at home and certainly love the people and the vibrancy of India, and the phrase, "It's no problem." It permeates you when you hear it so much and you begin to see the way people interact with one another; in trying situations they can overcome problems.

And the other place I call home is Mexico. When you see the textiles in Mexico and those in India, you see the similarities, the colors, the vibrancy, the large number of indigenous people in both countries, and the ingenuity. It's just remarkable. In terms of curriculum writing, my students would laugh at me when they saw me carrying all these books, and they would warn me that I would get "curriculum elbow," like people get tennis elbow. But I feel that part of our responsibility is to understand the different perspectives that people hold and why they hold them. Understanding time,



and space, and culture, is extremely important to really delve into the perspectives that other people hold, to begin a dialogue, and to understand people who are different from yourself.

Q: Beautiful! And that is pretty much what compassion is all about, isn't it?

Yes, it is. I've not heard anyone say this, but I'm sure it's been said that compassion is acting in solidarity with other people. And when you act in solidarity with others, you take the lead from them, don't you? You don't come in and say, "I have the solution!" Rather, you explore collectively what that solution might be. Oftentimes, I feel that our own personal wisdom gets in the way of really being effective.

Q: How did your work in the field of compassion begin?

That's a really wonderful question, and one that each person needs to reflect on throughout their life. I had incredible role models, primarily my

grandparents. I was fortunate to be graced by them. Although I didn't live with them, my family lived very close by, and I think it was my grandmother who really taught us how to interact with others. And, as an immigrant family, my grandparents set the stage for being part of the community. Now that I look at it, I'm quite certain that they felt responsible for their community, and that there were always exchanges.

I remember that a close friend of the family died, and there were young children left behind without parents, because the other parent had already died. So my grandparents took them in. They added three new children to their family. I don't think there was any question of it happening. Another thing, here in the US after World War II, the importance of the unions was very predominant in our history, and so many of our families who worked in industry were in the unions. There was a shared responsibility for taking care of one another; health care was extremely important because we didn't have such stringent safety laws, and people often got seriously injured.



So the union was there, and probably personal responsibility and civic responsibility weren't much different. Now we live in a different age. We went through an age of individualism, and now I hope that we go back to one of participation, so that our voices are heard. In the US, the Person of the Year in Time magazine is a big thing. And today they announced it was Greta Thunberg. Hopefully, that's an introduction to a whole new era.

Q: How did the Charter for Compassion come about for you?

In the early '90s, there was a documentary made called "Voices in Wartime," and I was asked to contribute by putting together a curriculum. The film was something of an archive in the arts for writing about war. So, I got involved with that, and the Charter had been going on simultaneously, and I was asked to be the Education Director in 2013. So, I thought I'd give it a try and started to do some work, and it just seemed like a perfect place for pulling together a lot of what I had been doing during my lifetime. That included education and community organizing, having spent most of my adult life in Chicago, which was always a city very involved in this because of an individual named

Saul Alinsky who ran an institute. People from all over would come to Chicago to learn about grassroots organizing, community organizing, and I was very much affected by the work that the institute was doing.

Q: What exactly is your role with the Charter? Now, you are the Program Director.

Yes. I was the Executive Director for a number of years, and I decided that I wanted to step back into the role that I started with, because with the Executive Director's role you have a lot of fiscal responsibility, raising money, and keeping the whole operation going can be rather trying. I really love education and the work I have been doing with cities.

If you look at the front page of the Charter, there are three areas of emphasis. The first emphasis is the cities, to help them come up with a viable action plan to address some of their most severe and grave issues. The second is education, and so we've been trying to create education options that deal with compassion, working with very young children; also embracing the work of the legacy program of the Dalai Lama, SEE Learning.

So, we're committed to introducing it to all our compassionate cities and beyond, because here's an opportunity for children to learn about values such as compassion and kindness, the value of responsibility towards others, secular ethics, socio-emotional learning and emotional intelligence. We're also working in conjunction with Life University, Georgia, USA, to offer an online course in compassionate integrity training, and we're doing more of that face to face.

Those are of high interest, and then the next level is the projects and programs that address fulfilling our responsibility to future generations in terms of our climate and nuclear disarmament, as these are all important issues that we base our work on.

Q: How has the Charter been received since its inception in 2008?

It was written in 2008, then launched in 2009 at the UN, so this is its 10th year. As an historical document, which it certainly is, it took some time for the creators to figure out what the direction was going to be. How would this document become a movement? It kicked into gear around 2013, when it went from being in the incubation of TED.com, which really embraced it, to an organization called the Fetzer Institute, and then to the Compassion Action Network, which was based here in Seattle. At the end of 2013 it became its own 501C3, but fiscally didn't turn over until 2014.

Q: So, how does the Charter work? How does it go about achieving its purpose at inception?

It is very much a grassroots organization at the city level. For example, in India we have a small movement in Bangalore, and a much bigger movement in Pune, in Mumbai and Delhi, in the larger cities that are growing in leaps and bounds. It's almost always a concern for people who want to make a significant change, so in Pune,

Delhi and Mumbai education is at the forefront of interest, and last year I went to India twice offering workshops and programs in schools and universities with business curricula. I did some work at the Management Development Institute outside Delhi, and SOIL, the School of Inspired Leadership, which has a master's program in business and community development.

So, it's different every time, wherever it might spring up. For example, yesterday, we were at the Seattle Mayor's office because they were among the first to sign the Charter for Compassion in April 2010. There is an effort to reaffirm it, and come up with new points that they want to work on. Here in Seattle, it's homelessness and youth empowerment, and because this is a real mecca for technology and business, we want to really see what can be done to come up with compassionate business strategies – so that business becomes a responsible force in society. In Karachi, it's water sanitation, the empowerment of women, starting businesses, and of course education. So, it differs from community to city, wherever it might be in the world. We don't advertise. People contact us. It's very much about spending time talking and figuring things out. We use Zoom, and I'm on it from morning until late at night. We really rely on this platform daily.

The language is much better in the Charter – you have to dethrone yourself and really pay attention to the needs of others. That, for us, is the Golden Rule.



Q: Can you tell us something about the Golden Rule?

The whole thought about “Doing unto others as you would want them to do unto you” is the basis of every philosophy or religious premise. The language of the Golden Rule is emphasized in the Charter – you have to dethrone yourself and really pay attention to the needs of others. That, for us, is the Golden Rule.

Q: Would you mind elaborating on what you mentioned earlier on how our own wisdom can become a barrier? What do you mean by that?

We all come to the table with our own personal history, our own likes and dislikes, and what we feel are ways to do something. I’m always quite amazed when I think I have a problem solved, and then when I open it up in our volunteer staff meeting and people give inputs I think, “Wow, those are incredibly good ideas, they expand

things.” I think what we have to do is to shelf our own declaration of what we think is the right way to do things and open it up so that there are inputs from others, and the most important input is grabbing hold of the concerns and ideas from people who are most closely associated with the problem.

Right now, in the US, we’re going through a very long election process with debates; we have a number of people who are really very good candidates, and there are different nuances they have regarding some issues, healthcare being one. Sometimes, I think wouldn’t it be great if a few top people who have different perspectives on the matter would get together and talk, and we could look at what are the most reliable plans that could help people. It’s not going to happen, obviously, but you really do need to open yourself. You might want to say that it’s compassionate listening and could lead to compassionate action. It’s also compassionate questioning. Many people have lost

the ability to formulate questions, and then, to listen to the responses to the questions.

Q: When I hear you sharing this, I feel the biggest thing that is separating one human being from the other, one race from the other, is this idea of looking at the same thing from different perspectives. As a representative of the Charter, how do you see these differences coming to an end in the future, a melding perhaps?

Melding, yes, that's a good word for it. In a way, this question was raised yesterday by the city attorney in Seattle. You could tell that he's such a good man, who wants to do the right thing, and feels so criticized when he does what he believes is the right thing.

We have to begin the process of knowing ourselves a little bit better, and move from tolerating others to accepting others to acknowledging, and then appreciating other people.

In our very hectic society, I don't think we get much beyond tolerance, which is one of the lowest things we can offer to one another. That's why education is so important. It's education for the self, understanding how we operate, how we can be compassionate to ourselves, because if we have that experience then we can truly be compassionate towards others. We can learn a whole lot about the way of interaction with others.

And then to understand, and this is what Compassionate Integrity Training is all about. How do we operate in a system compassionately? For example, we can find that something happened within our school, our work place or an organization – somebody passed a rule, somebody put limitations on our environment, and we go into an immediate reaction. This would have been different 40 years back, but, in this day and age, we're not only confronting someone in a physical environment but also on every social media

We have to begin the process of knowing ourselves a little bit better, and move from tolerating others to accepting others to acknowledging, and then appreciating other people.

platform that we can think of, and this is just exacerbating the dilemma that we're in.

So, we need to step back from all of this, which seems almost impossible right now. But I think people are realizing that we're on a kind of tipping point and we do have to find some solutions to this dilemma we live in.

Q: And how would signing the Charter support this movement?

Well, we can say, "Oh, we got another 10,000 to sign," and that's nice, but it doesn't mean anything unless people are committed to really following the words of the Charter, and seeing what they can do to make the world a better place in which to live. We have so many examples.

If we look at the UN's 17 goals for Sustainable Development, they are a very rough blueprint for us. They say this must be done, here's a situation, here are the reasons to do something, but they don't tell us and our communities to do this, this and this. That's for the community and the individual to decide. The water situation in India is so pressing, and certainly each person can do something, but it has to be millions of people



doing these things and I do believe that we're capable of doing it. It takes us to fill in some of the side roads that need to be traveled.

Q: Is there something specific you would like to share with us at this stage?

I wanted to find out about the Heartfulness organization. I think that one of the ways that the Charter works is to create a network, and to share, so, if we're in the same cities we can let our members know.

Q: So on your next trip to India, Marilyn, we would love to invite you to our center here in Hyderabad. It would be a very fulfilling collaboration.

And I would love to introduce you to some of the key people in India with whom we work. I look forward to it. And I'll spend some time on your website to find out more. Thank you.

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Memories

ANIRUDH DHANDA explores the way memories trigger heartfelt events and people from the past, and remind us of situations that evoke emotional responses. Is this what being human is all about?



It always surprises me: Brewing my first cup of tea, walking in the park, hearing a particular voice, the chirping of a particular bird, a forlorn leaf falling from the tree, smelling something distinct, seeing a person, seeing the sunrise or the longing of the dying sun, inhaling the aroma of food, reading a phrase in a book, hearing a song, or a voice in the park.

Any of these and many other similar mundane happenings during my waking hours can remind me of somebody, something, some happening, and my mind takes an instant flight in time. I am transported unconsciously, and without any active effort on my part, to another time. I smile involuntarily and move on. It's always a different experience in the string of life. It is not fanciful, but belongs to real life.

A steaming morning teacup transports me to my friend's place in Bolton, England, and I see him walking down the stairs still a little groggy and without his specs.

A particular aroma of food makes me instantaneously travel to my mother's kitchen, or to my aunt's kitchen in Delhi, India, and the taste of peas, mutton curry, or cutlets comes live on my taste buds.

The sight of the dying sun takes me to different locales. I view the entire scene at the Shimla Ridge with a single blow of cool breeze on my face.

The whiff of good coffee is enough to vividly remind me of the exhilarating mood at an international airport.

A swig of cold beer or sangria being served in a large, shapely glass flies me to Las Ramblas in Barcelona.

A hint of perfume conjures up a different picture ... so vivid.

How does it happen? Where is that storehouse of memories, which come thrusting through all the years gone by, yet is so lively?

I do not want to know the physiology behind it, or the functions of prefrontal cortex, temporal lobe, or the limbic system of the brain. All that is true, and there must still be much more to that which is yet to be unraveled by medical science. What I wish to share is the sheer marvel of the whole thing. That is, the existence of a storehouse and the immaculate retrieval system which is activated on the slightest of provocation.

I so clearly recollect the voice of my elder brother, which I heard, or thought I heard, in a busy market in Guwahati, after more than seven years of him being gone. I cried into my pillow the entire evening, something I haven't done once in the last seven years. Is our karma too imbedded somewhere in a similar kind of cloud store?

Attempting to live in the present moment is a utopian arrival at a point where we will not be affected by past happenings and future uncertainties. Is it actually that? Or are we running away from your past and not dealing with it? Such

happening presupposes voluntary death of the prefrontal cortex, temporal lobe, and the limbic system of the brain. Would we still continue to be human, I wonder?

Learning from the past and working in the present, unmindful of the future, is the beauty of being human and not deliberate forgetfulness.



Transforming Awareness:

Being a Life Coach



In October 2019,
PETER J. REDING spoke with **VICTOR KANNAN**
about being a pioneer in the field of professional
Life Coaching. In part 1, they speak about the role
of helping people to be authentic
and raising awareness.

Q: Peter, thanks for joining me. We're having a great day here in Atlanta; it's pretty nice, sunny and cool and comfortable.

Same here in Orlando, Florida. And Happy Diwali to you and to those who are celebrating that today around the world.

Q: Yeah, this is Happy Diwali. The world is becoming a smaller place, with everybody celebrating each other's sources of joy.

That's absolutely true, and the world needs as much light as it can possibly get, so this is a particularly happy time for the world and not just for the Indian people who are celebrating Diwali.

Q: Thanks Peter. You're a coaching profession pioneer,

teaching holistic coaching since 1996. You're also one of the founders of the Association of Coach Training Organization, and you have a book to your credit called *Positively Brilliant Self Mastery: Reclaim Your Authentic Self Now*. So you have enough in your DNA as a Life Coach. I would like to start off by asking, what is a life coach, what do you do as a life coach?

A life coach is really a facilitator of awareness of the client. We tend not to give it bias, we're not mentors per se, we're not educators, nor are we parental authority figures. A professional coach will ask questions to reveal to the client who they really are, and what they really want to do, and what brings a sense of satisfaction, completion, fulfilment to the client. Then we

ask the client if they're willing to do that. So I'm in the business of raising awareness.

Q: That's a pretty broad base. In terms of raising awareness for a CXO, who's supposedly already aware, how does that happen? When they advance, do they become less aware? Or is it the general risk of life?

A CXO is still human. They get caught up in the busy-ness of life and they forget who they really are in many cases. So, if you're human then get a life coach.

Q: What in your experience are the keys to success for a CXO? I thought they are the "aware" people already, and yet you're raising their awareness.

I've been one, first of all, and I've trained thousands of CXOs,



and as you may well know yourself, they are generally task oriented. They're there to get the job done; they're there to produce results. And if you think about the number of hours they spend in "getting it done," it's an external drive, mostly. There are exceptions; CXOs who are hugely compassionate human beings. They come from the heart, from the soul, they come from a place of supporting individuals as a sense of humanity. But, I would propose to you, there are more CXOs around the world that are driven by the external "What've you produced for me lately?" "Where are the results?" "How come this isn't done?" "You've dropped the ball." And so, in the coaching relationship, its "Who are you?" and "How do you want to bring your most authentic self to your work?"

So then there is an internal drive; an internal passion, compassion, that comes through and still gets the stuff done. I'm not saying that CXOs need to switch hundred percent over to Heartfulness. For me it's a both/and, not an either/or situation, and it's again raising that level of awareness for the individual on an on-going basis.

It says, "What's the right thing to do here from the place of humanity?" "What's the right thing to do in terms of ...?" "Yes, let's get the job done, but let's recognize that we're working with people who are mothers and fathers, who have great responsibilities beyond their work." And if they're in the wrong position, then let's bring that to the awareness of the employee and to the CXO and reposition them – find a place where they can bring their passion, their strengths, their natural God-given gifts and talents, to a different job, as opposed to the one they're suffering in right now.

And this goes on. I don't know if you noticed, but learning continues throughout life. So, it's kind of like that angel on your shoulder that says, "Is this what you really want to do?" "Is there a better way?" "Is there a way of bringing more of your authenticity into these negotiations, into letting this man go?" That's what we're talking about here.

Q: You talk quite a bit about authenticity. And I'm reminded of an interaction that I had with my spiritual Guide when

I asked him once if he had any tips for me so that I could progress faster. He said, "Be yourself." It was quite a long time ago, and that has helped me just be myself. I understand it's very difficult to coach a person who's pretentious, but what do you mean by authentic Self? And also, you're talking about authentic transformation, so what do you mean by Self and transformation that are authentic?

That's a great question. It's a compound question, actually, so let me decouple it just a little bit. Authentic transformation – transformation mostly – around the world, and this includes South America and North America, India and Asia, has the connotation of "You're not okay the way you are. I want to transform you into _____" – it could be a better employee, a better communicator, a better parent, a better spouse, a better citizen of the world. Actually I have a bit of a pushback with the word "transformation," but the way I use it is a deep, personal, back to who you really are. In the words of your spiritual Guide, "Be yourself." Exactly "what and who am I?" is at the core of that question. Am I the product of my parenting? Am I the product of being an American citizen? Am I

the product of being in the generation I am? Am I the product of the education I received, and all the influences around me? You know, you have to do this or you have to learn this in order to be successful, to be accepted, to be loved. So, for me the “who I am?” is a much, much deeper place. It’s a very spiritual place, it’s “who did my Creator make me to be?” What have I been endowed with from that creator (whatever name you give the creator)?

Now, in order to be true to that, comes the authenticity part. To what degree am I honoring those innate gifts? Not the skills and talents that I’ve learned because I had to learn them, but the

natural innate God-given gifts and talents that I have been endowed with? Am I developing those? Am I using them in my work? To what degree? Am I true to my life’s purpose? By life’s purpose, I mean in all my different roles – as an educator, as a coach, as a spouse, as a brother, as a son, as a citizen of the world?

The third case is core values. Everybody in the world lives by values. My question, has always been, “Yes, I’m living by values, I’m living with a purpose, I’m utilizing strengths that I have; but whose strengths, whose purpose, and whose values? Are they the values of my generation, are they the values

of my parents?” Again, it is not all bad. I’m not pointing a finger and saying, “Mom and dad really screwed up.”

And, are they my core endowed values from my creator in terms of my most authentic way of being? So, I come back full circle to authenticity.

So, transformation is not so much to be somebody different for the sake of my job, or because of what somebody wants from me in the current situation, but to what degree am I living in alignment with who I’m meant to be?

Deep, deep dive. There’s a lot of internal returning to my true Self, what I call now my core Self, as opposed to my adapted or adopted self. And therein lies the challenge. It’s life-long learning and a life-long course correction to what degree am I authentic, to what degree have I drifted away from that sense of authenticity.

That’s the absolute core of my work, why God put Peter on the planet. I support people to find that core Self.

Q: I love that a lot. People are not brave enough and honest enough to confront this primal issue of authenticity, and I don’t think there can be any combination of success



IT CHANGES EVERYTHING

and happiness without authenticity. Some may be successful, but at the end of the day if they're not authentic I think happiness will elude them.

I totally agree with that, one hundred percent.

Q: Peter, where does acceptance come into the picture? Because acceptance has got a big role to play in authenticity, does it not? And not just the "aware" part.

Acceptance, first and foremost, self-acceptance. "I screwed up, I'm human. I hope I can do better the next time." Again, awareness! Am I aware that I screwed up, or that I didn't follow the path of authenticity? So it's self-acceptance, and when I find I'm more and more self-accepting, then coming back to coach or to a CXO, or a good friend, I can hold a bigger space for them.

I have more compassion for being human. I have compassion for "it's not all perfect, it's not going to be one hundred percent, absolutely straight arrow authenticity." I strive for that, personally, and I understand when you say it takes a lot of courage to be yourself.

I read something by Whoopi Goldberg many, many years ago that said the hardest thing you'll

ever do in your life is be yourself. I think that's a true statement. It takes courage to stand up to parents: "Mom, dad, I don't want to be a doctor. I don't like medicine, I don't like autopsies, I don't like biopsies, I don't like this, that and the other, and I'm not particularly good at all the science that is necessary." Wow, huge courage for a kid of 18 years old, heading off to university. I tip my cap, because at 18 I didn't have that courage. That's something I developed later, in the latter half of my life.

Q: But to have that choice is a privilege, Peter, because

growing up I just needed to get admission into any college, leave alone the subject or career I wanted to choose. I'm talking about 35 to 40 years ago.

Right.

Q: Today this is a problem because there is choice. And so, there are desires from the point of view of the parents, and fears and concerns on the part of the children. That puts them at odds, and they have to develop courage. So, is courage a necessary thing when you have a choice, when



you have choices to make? If there was no choice where is the question of courage?

In my experience, in businesses and organizations there are international surveys at least 2 or 3 times a year that talk about employee engagement, or the lack of employee engagement. So now we have a system worldwide, a universal humanity thing, where parents out of the goodness of their heart want their kids to succeed. They want them to be happy, they want them to be good

citizens, they want them to be good contributors to their communities. I don't believe any parent wakes up in the middle of the night and goes, "Let's see, what can we do to screw up Peter so that he needs therapy at 35 years old."

That was not the case with my parents. They loved me and I loved them. Well, they don't know what they don't know, and it's generational because that's the way my parents treated me, and I turned out pretty good and

my great-great grandparents, and so on. There's a genuine love that a parent has for their child, for them to succeed, for them to avoid the pitfalls, traumas and dramas of their childhood, their career choices, their choice of partner etc.

Nowadays, courage is required at all points of life, not just for the 18 year old; it's also for the 22 year old, the 30 and 35 year old, to break the pattern of what society or peer pressure wants from them and say, "That doesn't





suit me, that doesn't conform to what I need to do for myself, to honor who I am." When they don't know who they are in the first place it's a guessing game of trial and error: "Let me try this ... nah... that didn't work. Let me try this ... that didn't work. Let me try this ... that feels a little bit better, maybe I'll stay with that one a little longer."

So, the question of courage when there's no choice: Well, for one, I believe that there's always a choice, and again it is tied into the courage of making that choice, and pushing back on bosses, parents, society, peer pressure, my buddy's from B-School etc. In the modern world, there are billions of choices that are facing all of us right now, not just kids. Again, it comes back to transformation. Am I transforming to a norm in all of those choices? For instance, I need to get so many likes on my Facebook or Instagram posts because that's what the social media peer

group is measured by. Am I making a choice to come into alignment with who I'm meant to be, who I was designed by my creator to be? That conversation really isn't taking place, not a lot in the world around me.

In our coach training some 8 years ago, at the end of a self-discovery process, one gentleman in India said, "Wow, this is an accurate description of my original self," what you and I are talking about, the authentic self.

One of the sayings that I've always shared in my classes is, "You'll never go wrong being your authentic self; you'll never go wrong in being your authentic self."

Q: That's very powerful, Peter.

To be continued....

One of the sayings that I've always shared in my classes is, "You'll never go wrong being your authentic self; you'll never go wrong in being your authentic self."

ON NOT KNOWING

IT REALLY BOTHERS ME



WHEN I DON'T HAVE ANSWERS



I SPEND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS



TRYING TO FIND AN EXPLANATION THAT FITS



IT'S ONLY WHEN I LIE DOWN UNDER THE STARS



I REALIZE I MAY NOT FIGURE OUT SOME THINGS IN THIS LIFETIME



AND THAT'S OKAY.



MAYBE IT MAKES SENSE IN SOME UNKNOWN WORLD.





be inspired

The authentic self is
the soul made visible.

SARAH BAN BREATHNACH



A User's Guide to Living

- Part 6

TRUTH & AUTHENTICITY



DAAJI continues his series on everyday living, introducing the fifth universal principle of the User's Guide, which is about truthfulness and acceptance of whatever hardships come our way. As a starting point, this fifth principle helps us to live a contented, peaceful life, with acceptance and compassion. Then, as we progress, it guides us towards the ultimate nature of Truth and Reality.

Within the five elements are ten universal principles:

The Practice

- 1 Create a daily morning meditation practice scientifically
- 2 Fill your heart with love before starting meditation and before sleeping
- 3 Fix your goal and do not rest until you attain it

Behavior Being to Doing

- 6 Know everyone as one, treating them equally & harmoniously
- 7 Do not seek revenge for the wrongs done by others, instead always be grateful
- 8 Honor the resources you are given as sacred, with an attitude of purity, including food and money

Essential values

- 4 Live simply to be in tune with Nature
- 5 Be truthful & accept challenges as being for your betterment

Leadership

- 9 Become a role model by inspiring love and sacredness in others. Accept the richness of their diversity, while also accepting that we are all one

Continuous Improvement

- 10 Introspect daily before bedtime, so as to correct your faults and avoid making the same mistake twice

Principle 5:

Always be truthful, accept miseries as coming from God for your own good and be thankful.

The nature of truth

This is a vast topic, so we will start at the level of day-to-day behavior and then progress toward the ultimate Truth of existence.

Some of you may know the famous statement of Polonius in Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, "This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." It is a universal principle that is valued in all cultures – to be genuine, original and authentic; to say what you mean and mean what you say; no hidden agendas, no masks; no hiding faults and no camouflage. Instead, only childlike innocence, purity and simplicity. Truthfulness means integrity, where thoughts are aligned with words, and words are aligned with actions. Where we walk the talk.

When we don't walk the talk there is a disconnect and a sense of hypocrisy. The result is the pollution and corruption of our conscious and subconscious mind. We feel uncomfortable in our own skin, and that lowers our vibration – because we are not listening to the authentic voice of the heart.

Truth or *satya* is one of the very first principles in Ashtanga Yoga. In other words, it is fundamental and basic. And yet, the fact that Babuji has to remind us to always be truthful can only mean that falseness is hidden somewhere within us, otherwise we would not need to be reminded. Does a small child need to be told to be truthful? No, because they have no awareness of anything else, so we

Truthfulness is dependent on purifying the full spectrum of consciousness – subconscious, conscious and superconscious – and to do that we require a method that reprograms more than just the conscious mind.

would instill the wrong seeds in the child if we did. We don't need to interfere with the purity and innocence of truth when it does exist.

But authenticity is not so simple to achieve. Our multiple personas are driven by our subconscious minds, hardwired into our neural pathways as a result of years of habitual behavior, and they are often not within our awareness or control. That is the dilemma we face as human beings – we know the importance of transparency and truthfulness, but we do not know how to manifest them in our lives. Our lens on reality is hampered by our past complexities, subconscious patterns and tendencies.

And it is cumulative – the more layers of complexity we add, the more difficult it becomes to listen to the voice of the heart and follow it, so the more easily we follow wrong guidance. When we suffer from an untruthful heart and the coercions

that result from it, it leads to an even greater lack of authenticity, so our inner environment is messed up and wrong habits are perpetuated.

And when we do try to be truthful without purity of consciousness, we often end up hurting others in the process, because our intentions are not always pure. So, while it is good to be truthful, until we arrive at inner purity we may not be able to express that truth without hurting others. When we do hurt others, even unintentionally, guilt often develops, and guilt is difficult to remove. It can only be done through genuine prayerful repentance and letting go at bedtime. And this brings us to another important aspect of being truthful – to accept our own failings with humility and genuinely offer them in a prayerful state. It purifies our system of guilty feelings, which are the hardest impressions to remove.

Related to this is another challenge we face: Can we cultivate truthfulness mindfully? Not really. The result will be superficial, because truthfulness is dependent on purifying the full spectrum of consciousness – subconscious, conscious and superconscious – and to do that we require a method that reprograms more than just the conscious mind. Some people try to do it through hypnosis, but hypnosis is a very primitive and laborious approach compared to the Heartfulness Cleaning. Unless and until we have removed all the layers of complexity from the subconscious mind, it is not possible.

Truthfulness emerges from within, once we remove all the overlaying complexities. Truthfulness is our inherent nature. In fact, once we try to correct it mindfully, it means we have lost the connection somewhere. Practicing truthfulness mindfully is like practicing compassion, or practicing self-acceptance; it is good that we are aware of the principles, but we need to adopt the right approach. In this case, the right approach is to expose



When we are in osmosis with that inner state, truth expresses naturally, without the need for any artificial efforts.

ourselves to the inner Reality, become one with it, and dissolve in that inner state. When we are in osmosis with that inner state, truth expresses naturally, without the need for any artificial efforts. That is what this principle 5 is all about.

To spread truthfulness, we don't need effort or external force, just as to love someone we don't need effort. To hate someone is a different matter – we have to think over it. To do rightful things we don't need effort; to do wrongful things we need effort. To fabricate lies we consume a lot of energy, and to continue on the path of lies requires even more. It never ends.

I'll share with you a humorous story about a thief who stole money from a rich man's house. Later on he went to a shopping center, started spending the money, and got caught because he was using counterfeit notes.

So he was summoned to the court, and he argued with the judge, "My Lord, if I had known that these were counterfeit notes, do you think I would have stolen them?" Nice logic, no?

The judge said, "I agree with you. You would not have stolen them if you had known."

"So how can you charge me for stealing counterfeit money?"

**An unwavering
commitment to truth is
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The judge replied, "Okay, I will not charge you for stealing counterfeit money, but I will charge you for stealing."

Two days later, the thief was summoned before the judge for sentencing, and he argued again, "No, my lord, you cannot sentence me, because the notes were counterfeit. How can you charge me for stealing currency that has no value?"

See his state of mind! Lies logically perpetuate a crooked mind.

This is a very crude worldly example, but it does demonstrate how we get caught up in the web of complex thinking to justify ourselves. Compare this with truth, which is so simple, effortless, and creates no heaviness in the system. There is only innocence. Babuji, the author of these ten principles, writes in his [commentary](#) on principle 5, "Truthfulness really implies the sense of presenting one's own self in its true colors. This is the state at which one exclaims spontaneously, 'It is as it is.'"

An unwavering commitment to truth is demonstrated by correct thinking and right understanding, and both require clarity of mind and discernment – known as *Viveka* in Yoga. It also requires all the values of the heart, including courage, in order to act upon that thinking and understanding.

The science of Reality

Today, most people accept science as being the source of true knowledge, because science uses reasoning and experimentation – it is measurable. And most people think of science and spirituality as being poles apart. Yet, is it really so? Babuji defines spirituality as "the science of Reality," the science of truth.

During his lifetime, Babuji explored, researched, described and compiled a detailed map of Reality, and created a method of evolving consciousness through all the various stages, in a series of steps. He described this stepwise process as the evolutionary journey through the chakras of the human system, in his book, *Towards Infinity*. His research meets all the criteria for scientific discovery – it is observable, precise, measurable, and consistently repeatable from person to person.

Babuji explored truth by starting with the cause of our existence – the causal body or soul. It is from this base that consciousness, then all forms of energy, and eventually matter are created. In addition to the five senses used for observation by most scientists, spiritual scientists are also able to utilize direct perception. In fact, the Sanskrit root of the word “rishi” means “to perceive.” A rishi is someone whose perception is pure, because the field of their consciousness is pure and unbiased. A rishi can perceive truth directly, without the coloring or interference of the mind.

A spiritual scientist will tell you that there are as many universes as there are minds to perceive; what we perceive is a projection of the mind. And it is only when our consciousness is pure that the other functions of the mind (e.g. contemplation, thinking, feeling, intelligence, decision-making, ego and willpower) are unbiased. Only then is real Truth perceived. For most people, consciousness is colored and filtered because of the complexities and impurities they have accumulated. Their lens of perception is not clear, and information is interpreted according to the concepts of their belief system. What is perceived is their individual reality rather than the universal Reality.



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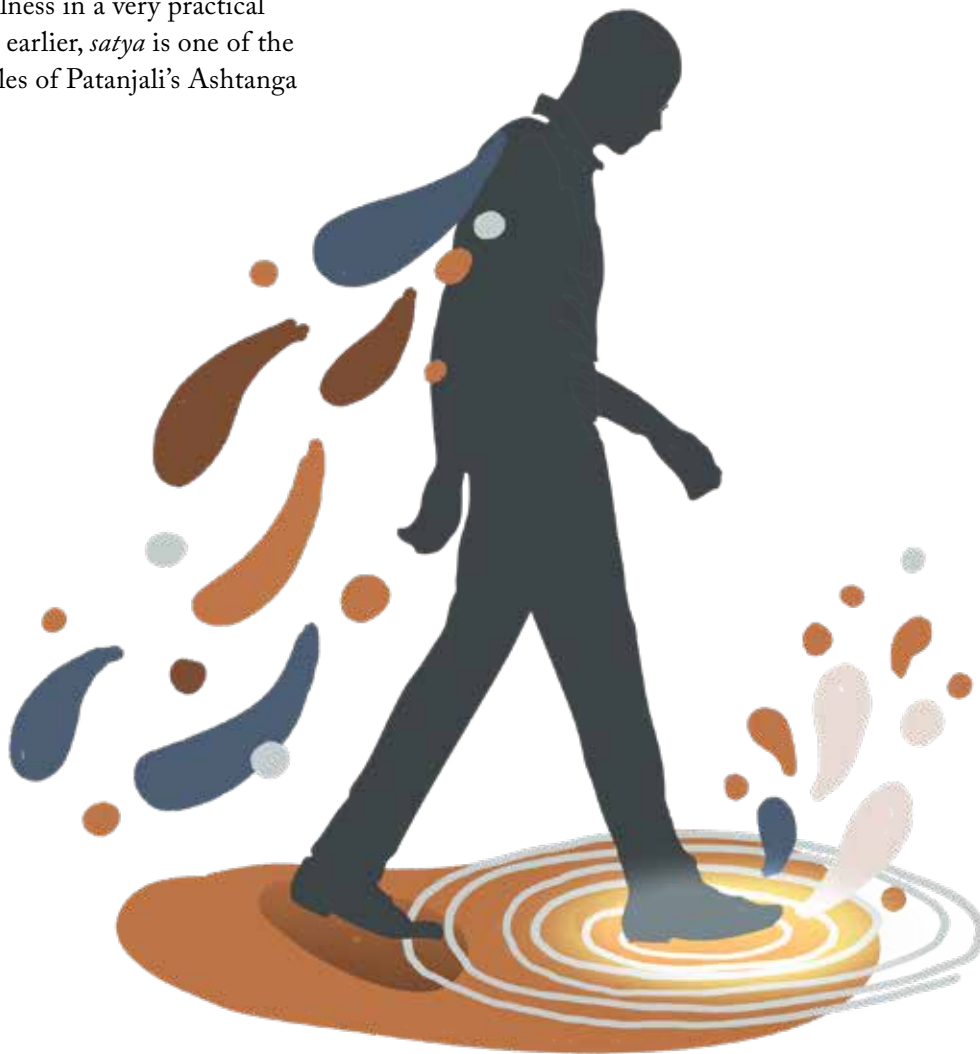
How do we arrive at truthfulness?

If Reality is that undefinable state described as “it is as it is,” how do we get there? It can happen only by freeing ourselves from every concept, by removing all the complexities and impurities in our field of consciousness. And that requires a set of meditative practices, correct thinking and right understanding, proper action and right behavior. Only then do we arrive at the consciousness of Reality, and when that consciousness too ends will we arrive at the next state, akin to Truth.

Let's explore truthfulness in a very practical sense. As mentioned earlier, *satya* is one of the fundamental principles of Patanjali's Ashtanga

Yoga, and it is there in every tradition, for example, Jesus expressed it by saying that he was the Truth. At this deeper level, *satya* means a willingness to explore and be committed to that which is unchanging, the absolute Reality.

We try to be truthful in everything that we do so that our actions and dealings are in consonance with that final state. In practical terms, it means that at any point of time we are committed to the highest truth we can perceive. It is not a fleeting thing, like an opinion or a judgment. To be truthful in any situation is to consider the most stable point of view.



The truth behind miseries

The second part of this fifth principle tells us to accept miseries as coming from God for our own good and be thankful. What has this to do with being truthful?

On the surface, this seems so controversial and paradoxical, even ludicrous. Imagine that you are suffering because your young child is critically ill, and someone tells you to be thankful to God! How will you feel? It would be inhuman to be unaffected, and yet some level of poise and acceptance must come if you are to provide the best support for your child. You will have to transcend that feeling of misery, somehow, so that you can be effective in helping anyone. Now, imagine another type of situation, where you are going through difficulties that you know are for your evolution, or for love – will you perceive them as miseries? Not at all. Like Majnu with Layla. Even during the hardship, you will not be cognizant of the pain, you will not be aware that a fire is being lit underneath you. You will simply move on in complete acceptance.

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You see, when you have to keep reminding yourself, “Take this misery as a gift, enjoy it as a gift from God,” then it’s no longer a gift. Once you are aware of the pain, and try to convert it, by hook or by crook, into a gift, it becomes a challenge for an ordinary human mind. And we are all ordinary people.

We generally seek what is pleasurable and run away from what is painful. As the intellect processes all the information received by our senses, it classifies them into two categories – likes and dislikes. In Yoga these are called raga (attraction, attachment) and dvesha (aversion). When we don’t get what we want, we feel miserable. And when we get what we don’t want we also feel miserable. Therefore there is a constant process of push and pull that is the root cause of all the sufferings that we experience.

The truth is, nature brings us exactly what we need for our growth and evolution. It is only when we label them as likes and dislikes, good and bad, that they become attraction and aversion. Our brain is often hardwired to resist, and when we resist what happens? We resist Reality and we feel miserable. When we perceive the truth behind miseries – that they are given to us to remove all the complexities that obstruct Reality – they become gifts from God. Then we go through the experience, feel what we must, and move on.

This is skill in action, and it is a skill that comes from doing a daily meditative practice. It involves being able to rest in a state of neutrality and stillness in the moment, so that we may have complete acceptance of Reality. When this state is achieved, no matter what happens we will be more effective in dealing with the situation at hand. We also see the truth behind the miseries, and develop a very natural acceptance in the face of suffering.

It is a state where we are so immersed in the divine love that it does not really matter what happens in



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our life. There is no need for analysis, there is no need to think that it is a blessing or a heavenly gift from above, because where love is there, where is the need for introspection?

But most of us are not at that level yet. When we are not able to sail through unaffected, what can we do when the situation is unfavorable? We are already affected, so there are only two possibilities: either we accept or we resist. Let us say we resist, will the misery disappear? No. Simply by desiring it to go, it doesn't disappear! Whereas, once we accept it, something new emerges from inside.

It is a state where we are so immersed in the divine love that it does not really matter what happens in our life. There is no need for analysis, there is no need to think that it is a blessing or a heavenly gift from above, because where love is there, where is the need for introspection?

The first thing that emerges is that we start preparing ourselves to surmount it. We become stronger in the process. Second, we proceed along the path of continuous improvement: “I am going through this misery because ...” and, “I should have done that instead.” We become wiser, better, and we learn how to get out of the situation. This is possible once we accept things. If we don’t accept things, we will still suffer, but we won’t learn anything, we won’t become wiser, and things won’t change.

Here is how Babuji describes a person who has learnt to accept miseries: “After sufficient practice, it becomes his second nature and its consciousness too drops off. The glamour too passes away. When this is attained, there remains nothing but swimming in the sphere of Reality, and further on

the idea of swimming too becomes extinct. The power generated by the habit of forbearance helps him a good deal in his pursuit, and he enters the sphere described above.”

This stage is often achieved by Heartfulness practitioners. Acceptance brings such a liberating attitude that helps us to continue onward toward Reality, where we experience calmness of mind. We realize that all apparent miseries and sufferings are invaluable gifts. The feeling of joy naturally leads to gratitude.

Reflections on the principle of truthfulness

Let’s now explore how we can apply this principle in everything that we do. We may not yet have reached the stage of ultimate Truth, but are we at least authentic?

At the deepest level, truthfulness is a commitment to that which is Real and unchanging. In daily life, it translates to integrity and alignment between thoughts, words and deeds. Other ways to describe that state are authenticity, sincerity and genuineness.

Let’s for a moment think about the opposite of true, which is false. When something is not presented “as it is,” we say it is false. And if we examine our lives, we will see the presence of falseness all around us and within us too. When we pretend to be what we are not, it falls into the false category. As discussed earlier, we know that it is generally not intentional, that most of our personas are unconscious, we are not aware of them. That is why the practice of self-study, known as *swadhyaya*, is so important in Yoga – so we become conscious of our patterns and



make changes. And even more important to the awakening of truth is the Heartfulness Cleaning, a practice developed by Babuji to remove the root cause of our subconscious patterns and tendencies – our *samskaras*.

What happens when we identify our ego, our sense of self, with anything other than Reality or Truth? The ego then becomes a false identity. It is no longer original, but a self-modified version of the original. It has been programmed and conditioned by our experiences from childhood, and is shaped by our interactions with our immediate environment. It is a coping mechanism, a series of masks we wear, personas, identities that we assume, to get through day-to-day existence, that

become hardwired into our neural circuitry. Yet we think it is who we are. At an unconscious level, we believe the ego is who we are because it defines our identity, and it has been colored by all the various layers of human experience from our past.

When we look outside, the truth is colored by these masks. Generally, it is easier to observe this in others than in ourselves. Then, to make it worse, there are companies that try to convince us to buy their stuff. There are politicians who pretend to be representing us. And the media serves us a steady stream of fake news, and the social media pull us in multiple directions.

In the midst of all this how do we live truthfully?

In our life also, all these troubles are at a physical level, mental level, ego level, and subtle body level. What happens when we go to the center of ourselves, by going to the innermost depth of our heart?

By aligning our thoughts, words and action with the highest truth that we can perceive in our heart. The quality of discernment of the heart helps us to separate truth from falsehood, especially when we meditate and cultivate that discernment.

I have learnt something from tornadoes and hurricanes. The safest place in a tornado is the center, the eye of the storm. At the periphery there is havoc, but at the center it is extremely still. In our life also, all these troubles are at a physical level, mental level, ego level, and subtle body level. What happens when we go to the center of ourselves, by going to the innermost depth of our heart? I wish that we all may learn to do that. It is possible with a little practice; a little interest will take us there.

This is where our Heartfulness practices help. As we travel inward on this journey, we experience and become one with successive levels of consciousness at each stage. This results in ever-increasing levels

of awareness and discernment, helping us to perceive reality from higher perspectives at every stage. In other words, as we evolve to higher and higher stages, our thoughts, words and deeds resonate more and more authentically with our center through the heart.

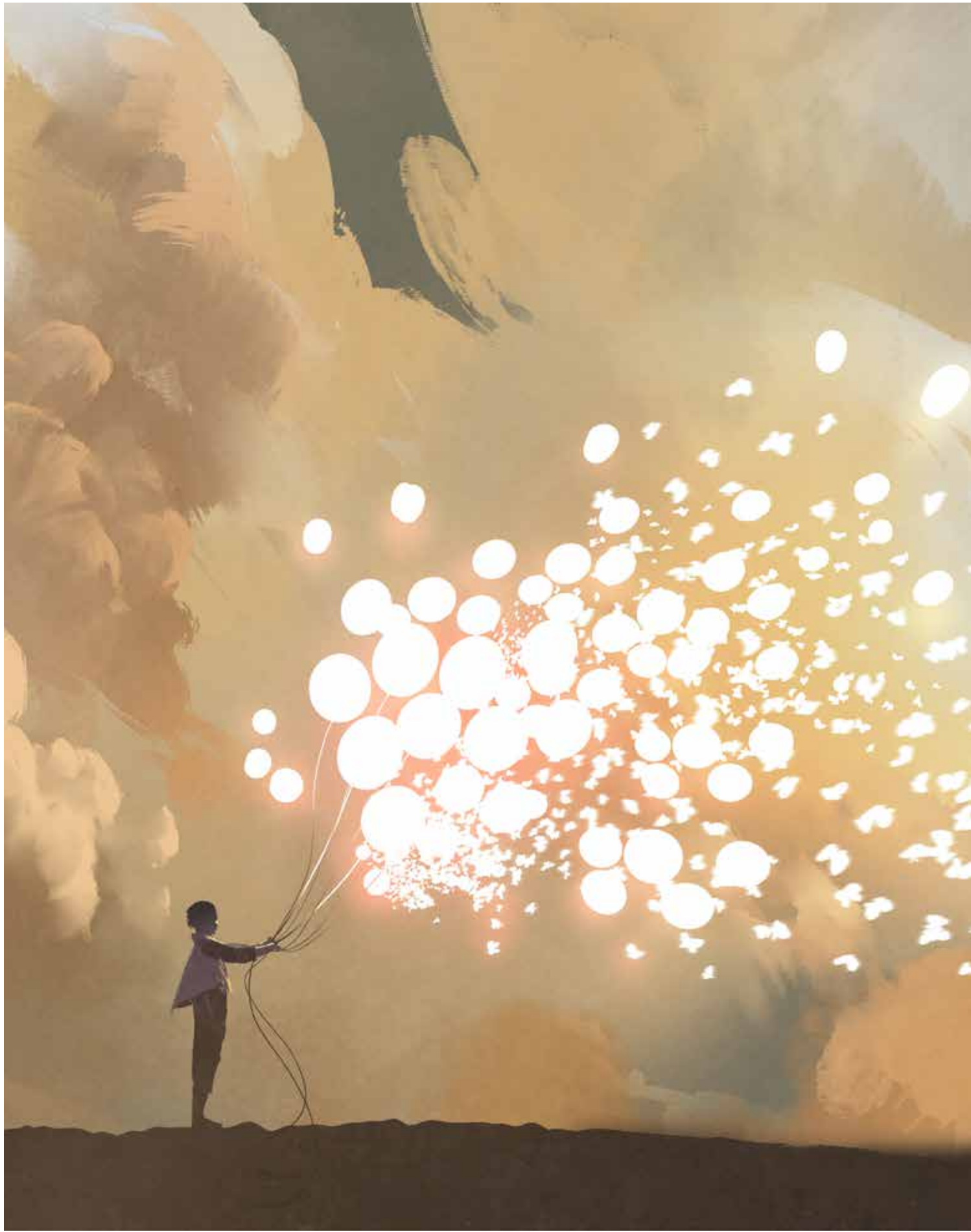
When we are truthful, we are light, authentic and genuine. Our confidence increases. We become morally stronger.

When we perceive Reality with the eyes of truth, we realize that pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. We cannot choose one and avoid the other. When we accept this with complete understanding, we are filled with gratitude. We accept everything as a gift from the universe.

The twin principles of simplicity (principle 4) and truthfulness (principle 5) are intertwined like two strands of a rope, and together they lead us to the highest state of being. While simplicity enables the shattering of our individual network, truthfulness enables us to see through our illusions and perceive Reality as it is. Both lead to the final state of purity that we arrive at before the final destination.

Some months back, when I was remembering Babuji, the following words bubbled up to describe him: "Simple in every sense, pure in every sense, selfless in every gesture, caring in every act, ever smiling and blissful, yet my beloved, my all in all, my everything, suffered all the time." Such a wonderful paradox of blessings and sufferings!

When we live in the heart, we are always connecting Reality with day-to-day life, and the result is an integrated state of being, rich and whole. This we will continue to explore in the next three principles, which are also about human behavior.





Taste of Life

The essence of
generosity is letting
go.

PEMA CHÖDRON

The Second Arrow

MEREDITH KLEIN shares her thoughts and experience on self-generosity, and especially how to avoid the Buddha's concept of the second arrow.

A teacher of mine offers each cohort of students she works with an exercise where she asks them to make a list of all the people they care for in their lives. At the end of five minutes, students put down their pens, and then she asks how many people included their own names on their lists. People rarely, if ever, list themselves.

Similarly, if I asked you now to make a list of the people for whom you practiced generosity, would your name make the list? Most likely not. For most of us, when we are asked how we practice generosity, we bring to mind transactional acts of giving between ourselves and something or someone external to us – whether another person, institution or organization. Perhaps something tangible is involved, or perhaps what we give is intangible (like our time or presence). But almost always, generosity is thought of as an act that binds two parties via the act of giving.

Beyond the ways we have been socially conditioned to think about generosity, we may not bring ourselves to mind when thinking about our generosity practice, simply because many of us have not built a habit of practicing self-generosity. I witness this all the time with my clients, who tell me how they will go to great lengths to find



time to prepare healthy, nourishing meals when they have guests coming for dinner, but who will fiercely resist making the effort to cook for themselves, and may even skip meals altogether. For most people, generosity is easier to cultivate for people and things outside themselves, and far harder to conjure up for ourselves.

There are many ways to practice self-generosity, and while many are active practices of dedicating time and resources towards our own betterment, there are also practices of restraint – abstaining from a particular behavior can present a path for self-generosity.

One of the most fruitful ways in which I've found to apply this form of self-generosity is the practice of avoiding the second arrow. This comes from a parable in which the Buddha taught that while we cannot avoid the first arrow (inevitable acts of suffering), we can avoid the second arrow that we inflict upon ourselves in the form of our reaction to the first arrow.

For most of us, our default second arrow is to travel down a thought spiral of self-criticism because of our mistake. By avoiding the second arrow, we practice generosity towards ourselves by actively choosing to keep our mental space clear of self-criticism.



This practice is especially potent in situations where we have made any type of mistake. For most of us, our default second arrow is to travel down a thought spiral of self-criticism because of our mistake. By avoiding the second arrow, we practice generosity towards ourselves by actively choosing to keep our mental space clear of self-criticism. For example, if I break a glass and cut myself, an act of self-generosity would be to simply witness what happened, bandage my hand, and pick up the broken glass. The less generous path would be to pile on stories about how I am clumsy or have failed to be mindful.

When we practice in this way, we allow ourselves to tap into a deeper form of generosity – the recognition that as human beings, we will never adhere to any model of perfection. Freed from the shackles of the unrealistic expectations we hold for ourselves, we can extend this remembrance to others. In this way, self-generosity can be the fuel for the extension of greater generosity of spirit to everyone we encounter.



An Art Essay

Expressions

PART 2

In this delightful interview and art essay, **BHAMINI SHREE** shares her journey of expression through painting with **MEGHANA ANAND**. Through art, gradually she was able to manage her depression, expand her self-expression, and also develop her art as a career. In part 2, Bhamini tells us more about Madhubani Folk Art.



Q: Can you share with us something about the history and origin of Madhubani art?

Madhubani is a place in the north-eastern part of India, in Bihar, in the Mithilanchal area. It is the birth place of Sita, the wife of Lord Ram. This form of painting was started by the country women of Madhubani, and the entire culture is called Mithila culture. They started using natural pigments, like pollen, turmeric, cow dung, or indigo to make patterns on the walls of their homes, which were around the celebration of life and marriage.

Since Mithilanchal is considered to be the birth place or mother's home of Sita, they celebrate it in that way. And also the fact that Sita is a woman. In Madhubani, a lot many forms are related to the Tantric form of painting depicting the goddess Durga, Kali, or *Ardhanarishwar* [half man-half woman], reflecting the locals' joy and pride that these female deities have taken birth in their place.

Madhubani is also about the celebration of marriage. There is something called *kohbar*, which is a small room that is painted and decorated – the entire walls are decorated at the time of a wedding – and this room is given to the newly-wedded couple for consummating their marriage. So, all the elements that are used in these paintings are about nature, fertility, the celebration of love,

the *navagrahas* [the nine planets] out there – everything auspicious. The fish, the turtle, the peacock, the parrot, everything that is auspicious is celebrated.

So it's about fertility, and the celebration of life and marriage. That's how it started.

Q: What are the media used in Madhubani art?

Traditionally, the colors used in Madhubani paintings were all natural pigments. For example, natural indigo for blue; turmeric for yellow; natural flowers for red; leaves for green; and a mixture of soot and cow dung for black. They would paint with these colors on the walls.

Nowadays we usually paint on fabric or paper. On paper we mostly use acrylic colors. On cotton cloth, we use fabric color. And those who feel they can afford to give proper time to their art usually use bamboo sticks in place of brushes.

Bamboo sticks are used because they are thin and lightweight, and they give a lot of precision in the art. That's how it's done traditionally, but if we're short on time we use whatever we want. There is no hard-and-fast rule. Whatever suits, you use.

Q: What is the significance of geometric symbols in Madhubani art?

The women who started Madhubani painting were mostly illiterate, and they did not have means to improve their painting skills. So the patterns they drew were mostly naïve at that time. They would stick to circular or rectangular patterns while making images. If they were painting the moon, they would paint a semicircle; and if they were painting the sun, they would paint a full circle. That is how they would distinguish.

These geometric patterns are nothing but the elements of nature. So every element is drawn in a particular way. With little modifications you can play around with the pattern, but it's more or less made in a certain way.

Q: Tell us about your workshops.

My workshops are open to everyone who wants to attend. I try to teach the essence of Madhubani painting, and show the participants how they can devise their own patterns. Once they know the basics, and the elements that distinguish this form of painting from others, the art is not difficult. Since this form of art is about nature, I explain to them how it is related. Once they understand the scope, they can make their own paintings. They don't have to copy existing paintings on the Internet.

Q: What is the current status of folk art in India, and what is its scope in the future?

To my understanding, even though we have some really good artists, they are not able to reach the market in the right way. Now that a lot of NGOs have come up, they are starting to bridge the artists with the market, but it is still a rare thing to see. Say there are 100 artists, perhaps 10 of them are able to get in touch with NGOs, the market people or mediators. The remaining 90 are left out, most of whom are women. Women are really good at folk painting, and they are not able to reach the market.



The other aspect is that folk art is mostly handmade, and people need to understand that it is exclusive and so it is expensive. In India we also have this mindset of bargaining: We are happy to buy an online print at a lower price than the original.

But the possibilities are great. The international market recognizes the folk art of India more than the locals do. That's the irony. The kind of scope and demand there is for Madhubani painting in the international market is not here in our own country. To me that is quite disappointing. You cannot put a tag on art, for someone has put their heart, soul and mind into it.

Q: Yes, that's true. So what does art truly mean to you?

Well, I call my art “*Pouli*,” which means “bird” in Greek. I honestly believe that art is like a bird – it knows no limit. It doesn’t know how to settle down, it flies. You can’t stop a bird from flying, and you can’t stop an artist from expressing. And that’s what art is about – expression. Expression of our subconscious, expression of our aspirations, which cannot be put under a ceiling.

In my opinion, art is about whatever comes to your mind; you say that, you express that. It could be anything – your fragility, your vulnerability, or even your sensuality for that matter. People may call it erotic or pornography, but it’s not. Art is not pornography, it’s different. Art is expression; art is not objectification.

Everything that comes to your mind is expressed in a beautiful way. You don’t have to use a word and it’s already expressed. Be it rage, be it anger, be it frustration, you can express it. It’s like a bird that can fly wherever it wants to. Nobody can stop it, as it has wings. And this is why I call my art “*Pouli*.”

Q: Lovely! Finally, what tips would you like to share with the youth of today, or anyone for that matter, who are looking to follow their heart's aspirations?

Before you think what is good, right or wrong for you, it’s important that you analyze yourself. If you have a false belief that, “I can do this, and I can do that also,” the first thing to do is to burst the bubble. You have to know what you can really do, and if you would like to do this for the rest of your life.

So, ideally, the first thing is to talk to mentors, to understand the opportunities out there. And mentors need not necessarily be your teachers, or elder siblings, or somebody you already know. Look out for somebody who really inspires you in the truest manner. They are mentors. Talk to them, talk about your insecurities, talk about what

you want to do in life, your aspirations, and take insights from them.

The second thing is to introspect. Introspection plays a very important part. Sit and be true to yourself. For example, if you are preparing for your IIT exams and you think this is not what you want to do, you also need to think what you are good at. And if you don’t know that, you need to start exploring. And for you to explore, you need to do 10,000 other things to know what you are good at.

The same thing applies to art also. If you think you want to be a portrait artist, maybe you can’t be a landscape artist at the same time. But it’s also not necessary that you have to choose only one stream. So the best thing is to try your hand at various media and experiment.

It’s important to see where your heart truly lies. And at the same time, you need to consider if you are able to sustain yourself with whatever you choose to do in life. Be practical also.

Q: Thank you, Bhamini, for this enlightening conversation. I wish you all the very best in your heart's endeavors.

Thank you very much.

Website - www.bhaminishree.com

Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/bhamini_shree/



THE KITCHEN OF LOVE

JOHAN DE SMIDT

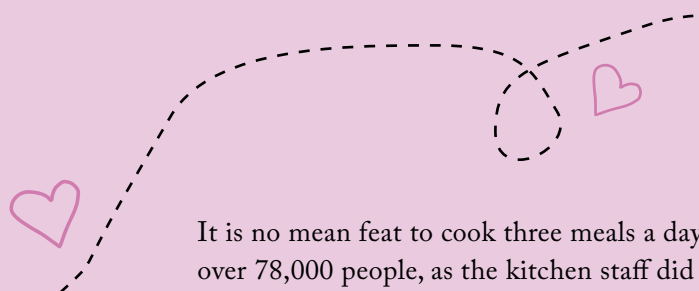
is a journalist and photographer from Cape Town, South Africa, who visited the Heartfulness Headquarters at Kanha Shanti Vanam before COVID-19 struck, and documented some of the activities. Here he showcases the kitchen, which since March has been supplying meals to up to 50,000 disadvantaged people per day in the wake of COVID-19.



To find the secret ingredient in the kitchens of the Kanha Shanti Vanam ashram, you have to start your hunt before dawn. That is when the cooks are adding spice to their day with a Yoga wake-up routine. “They are a bit dull when they arrive, so we are boosting them, waking them up,” says the kitchen manager, Mr. Moganty Adinarayan.

On the morning that we visit the kitchen, Liliya Gasilina, a Russian volunteer Yoga instructor, is guiding the cooks through their *asanas* at 5 a.m. This dose of waking up will certainly come in

handy, because the kitchen has suddenly been informed that they have to cater for many more than the 2,500 people they expected for Sunday meditation. But this is par for the course for Adinarayan and his team of workers – every day brings its own surprises and they are used to changing plans at short notice. To be effective, they have to remain flexible, and the meal planning has to be spot-on. It is also of utmost importance to have close communication with the main gate officials who constantly update them with the latest attendance figures.



It is no mean feat to cook three meals a day for over 78,000 people, as the kitchen staff did for the inauguration of the Kanha Shanti Vanam meditation hall in February 2020, and still be able to hit the ground running when work starts at 4 a.m. every morning. In one stretch, the kitchen can provide food for 30,000 people. On this Sunday, after most of the people have left, they are still cooking for more than 2,500 people. “We always cook for 100 more than expected,” Adinarayan says. On the breakfast menu today there is idli, sambar, rice and banana chips, and if the scale of the cooking is awe inspiring, the quantities of ingredients used is even more mind boggling. Just for today, a total of 100 kgs of raw rice will be required to satisfy the visitors’ appetites.

Apart from planning for the large quantities of ingredients, there is the added challenge of getting the menu right to please the diverse palates of people from all over India, as well as from abroad. This is enough to give any kitchen boss a case of indigestion. “We have the difference between north and south of India. People from the north prefer wheat, they will have roti for breakfast, lunch and dinner if they can help it, while those from the south eat more rice,” Adinarayan says.

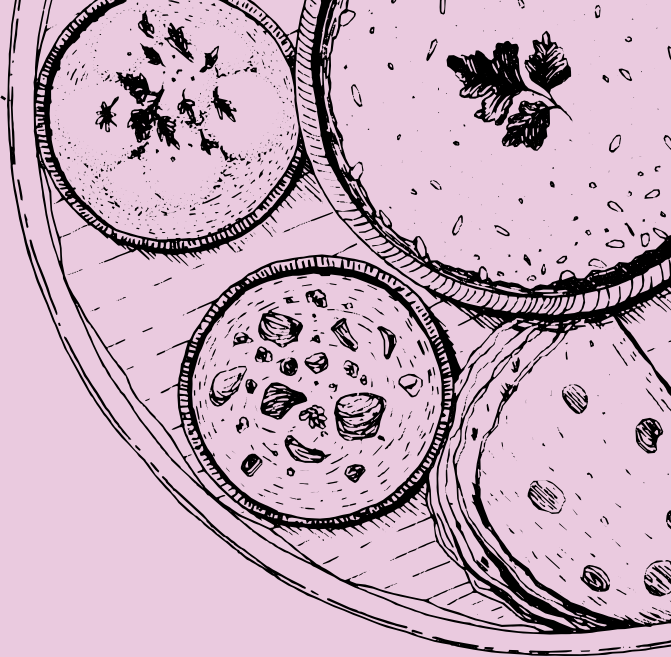
DIVINE FOOD FOR THOUGHT

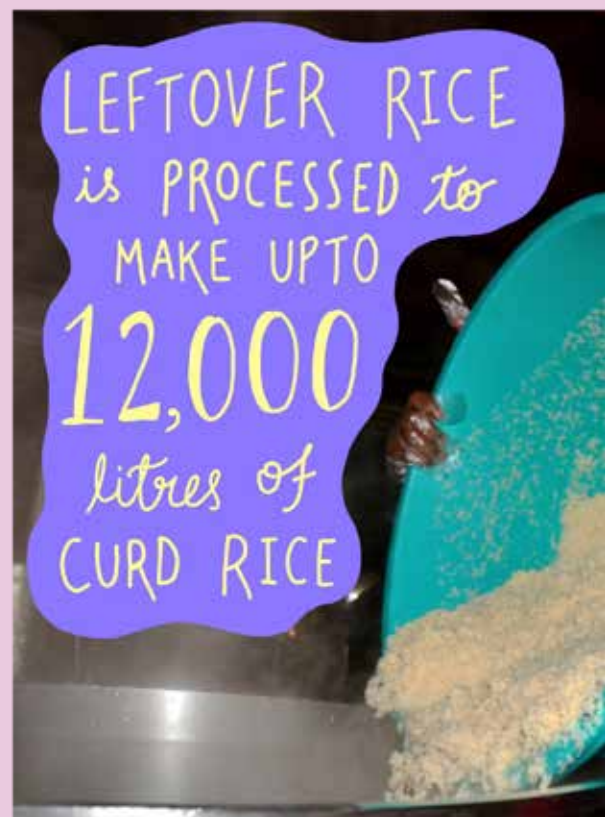
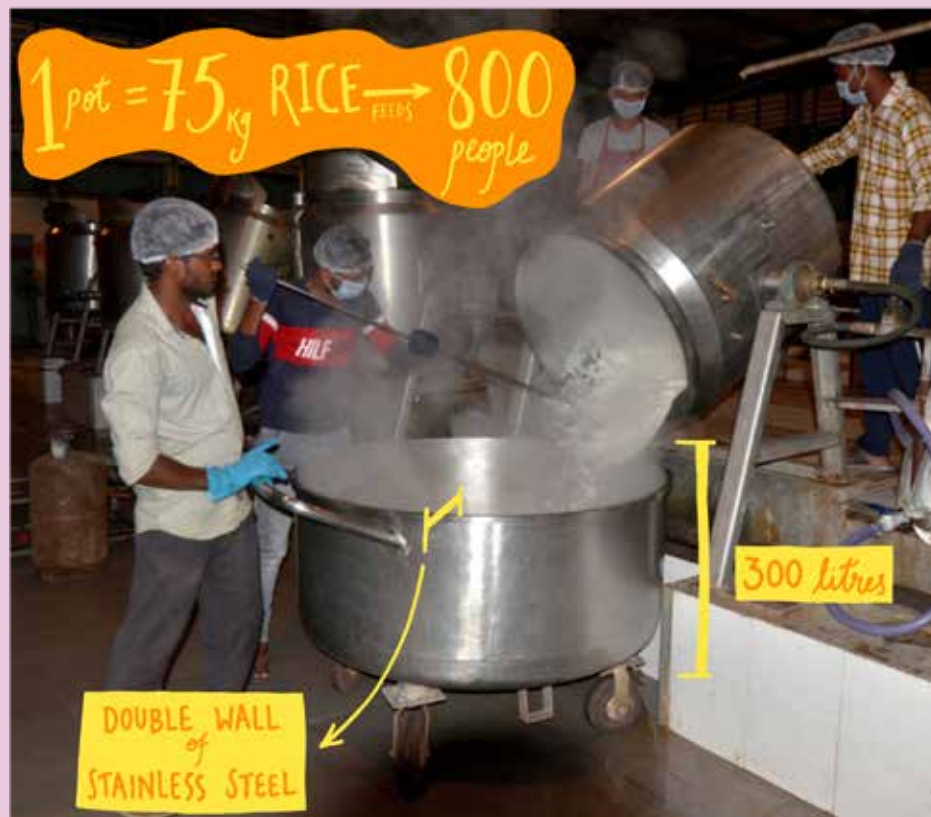
As far as approach is concerned, the biggest difference between this ashram kitchen and others catering to big numbers is that food here is made in constant divine thought, and handled by devoted practitioners. “It is mandatory for kitchen staff to attend the 7 a.m. group meditation and have weekly individual sessions too,” says Adinarayan. “Only Heartfulness practitioners work here. They come to work praying and leave praying. There is a lot of love and devotion, and willingness too. They put their hearts into their service, so the results are good. That is the main reason we are

eating in divine thought. While cooking, they have the thought, ‘This is divine food.’”

Adinarayan takes pride in their work, and such is his confidence in the quality of the food, that some of it is sent daily to the house of Kamlesh Patel, the Heartfulness Guide, who is fondly known as Daaji. “We expect it to be good enough for our Guide,” he says. Offering Yoga classes is not the only way in which other volunteers can contribute to the kitchen work. Daaji has invited all visiting international practitioners who attend training programs to cook in the kitchen, too. He has suggested that they be taught one dish of Indian cuisine and, in turn, they teach one dish of their cuisine to the kitchen staff.

After digesting all these magic ingredients that go into making the ashram food, we part with a 5 a.m. invitation from Adinarayan to be at the kitchen the next day to witness the almost alchemical making of 12,000 idlis, the steamed, soft pillows made from rice and dal, and eaten with coconut chutney. The batter for this is ground the day before and left to ferment overnight before being scooped onto huge stainless steel moulded pans and cooked in a massive steam oven. But of course, the magic ingredient is Yoga. And for that you have to rise before dawn.





COOL AS A CUCUMBER

The kitchen floor area is an impressive 46 m x 24 m. To keep the kitchen staff comfortable, happy and cool in an otherwise hot situation, much thought has been given to the layout and ventilation of the huge space, which is 8° to 10° C cooler than the outside environment. This is accomplished through cross-ventilation provided by the side windows, elevated work stations, double-walled pots and an 8 metre high ceiling with a 2 metre wide canopy extension right at the top. Each row of six pots is positioned on a concrete slab that is about 1 metre above the floor, which ensures that steam from the pots rises from above head-height straight up to the roof, where it evaporates through the canopy. “That way the cooks don’t sweat,” Adinarayan says, and that is evident as they coolly go about their business.

STEAMING HOT

To speed up cooking time, a diesel-powered plant outside the kitchen generates and delivers steam at 80° to 90° C to the double-walled stainless steel pots, in which the temperature is increased to 130° to 150° C. The preheating of the steam maintains a constant temperature in the cooking pots and reduces the cooking time of rice from half an hour to just 10 minutes; lentil dal is cooked in 30 minutes and vegetables in 15 minutes. The closed nature of the system ensures reduced heat loss, and therefore, efficient energy consumption. The double-walled structure ensures very little heat is lost from the sides of the pots; indeed, we stand right next to it and feel very little heat radiating.

When frying is required, to make a curry or sambar, it is done at floor level in moveable 800-liter pots, which can be easily wheeled onto



gas cookers, and to the base of the double-walled pots, from which the liquids are tipped into the frying pots. Vegetables boiled in the pots are mixed together to make curry, and lentils are added to the curry to make sambar. With the ongoing current threat of the coronavirus in the air, the focus is on boosting people's immune systems. "We add jeera (cumin), white pepper and turmeric to boost the immune system and keep people healthy," Adinarayan says. "Food is medicine."

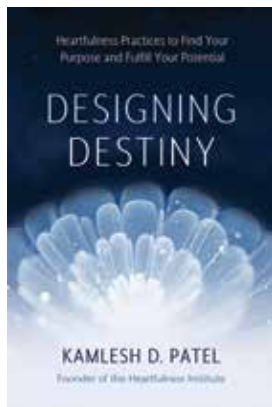
LEFTOVERS

At Kanha, special efforts are made to ensure minimal food wastage by reusing leftover food, feeding the rotis to the ashram cows, or making compost with it as a last resort. On the day we visited, leftover idli from the previous

day was chopped up and fried with spices to make idli upma for breakfast. Leftover rice is added to milk to make curd rice, while leftover curry is immediately put in the fridge at night for making other dishes in the morning. While they make every effort to reuse leftovers, food that was made for breakfast or lunch is easy to manage, however, leftover food after dinner is problematic, according to Adinarayan. That is when the leftovers end up being fed to the cows, or put in the state-of-the-art compost maker.



#1 BESTSELLER

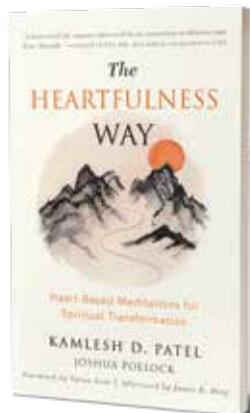


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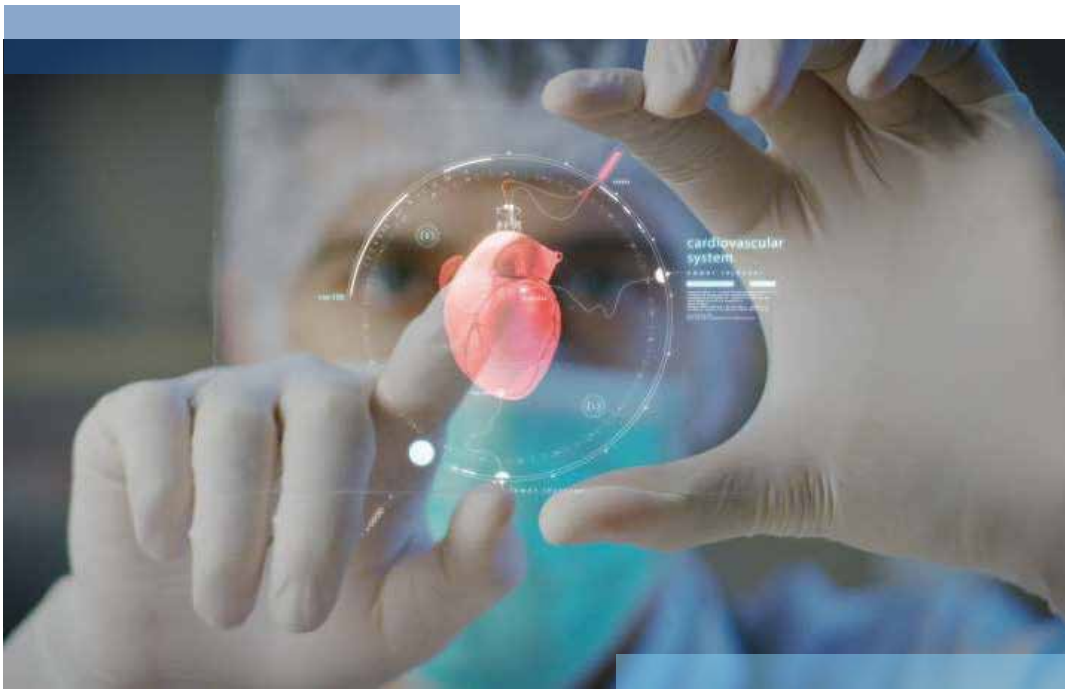
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