

# heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

How to Fill Your  
Heart With Love

**DAAJI**

A Silent  
Revolution

**YOGRISHI**

**SWAMI RAMDEV**

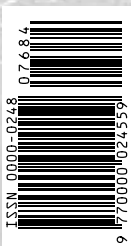
From Mediocrity  
to Greatness

**NANCY SUMARI**



*We are*  
**One**

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



# Uniting Humanity

Dear readers,

There are moments in human history that define change. And today, people with vision have already perceived the shift in consciousness that has been brewing for some time. A new era has been ushered in. An era for humanity to unite, for people of all cultures to honor and value each other, and for us to respect and love our Mother Earth who sustains our very existence. This movement toward unity and harmony is building all around the world, like an unstoppable rolling snowball. People from all walks of life are wishing for the change to come, especially today's youth. And it is time that the rest of us give them a future by supporting it. One of the first divides is religion – and people continue to fight wars or hold prejudice based on their religious beliefs, shameful as that would be to a God who is universal for everyone.

So in this edition we celebrate the movement towards unity and harmony. It starts with each one of us, and with every group that is willing to unite. Yogrishi Swami Ramdev celebrates unity, Daaji celebrates unity, and together they have brought their two organizations together to support and complement each other. Each of our young contributors celebrates the breaking down of barriers and preconceptions so that everyone's genius is recognized in a world that has outgrown prejudice, labeling and peer pressure. There is a courage brewing that bodes well for our future civilization, even though there is still a long way to go.

May these articles inspire you to initiate unity and harmony in your own communities.

All the best,  
The editors

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ISSN 2455-7684

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PRINTED BY - Sunil Kumar

Kala Jyothi Process Pvt. Limited, 1-1-60/5, RT C Cross Roads, Musheerabad, Hyderabad-500 020, Telangana

PUBLISHER - Sunil Kumar representing Spiritual Hierarchy Publication Trust on behalf of Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation, Chennai.

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Also known as Daaji, he is the current Heartfulness Guide. He offers a practical, experiential approach to the evolution of consciousness that is simple, easy to follow, and available to people of all ages and walks of life. Daaji is also a prolific speaker and writer, and his two books, *The Heartfulness Way* and *Designing Destiny*, are both #1 bestsellers.



## MARY GORDON

Mary is recognized internationally as an award-winning social entrepreneur, educator, author, child advocate and parenting expert, whose programs are informed by empathy. In 1996 she created the Roots of Empathy program, which is now offered in many countries, and in 2005 she created the Seeds of Empathy program for 3- to 5-year-olds in childcare. She is also the founder of Canada's first and largest school-based Parenting and Family Literacy Centers. Mary speaks and consults to governments, educational organizations, and public institutions, including the World Health Organization, the Skoll World Forum, and the United Nations.



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## YOGRISHI SWAMI RAMDEV



Yogrishi Swami Ramdev is an Indian Yoga Guru known for his work in Ayurveda, Ashtanga Yoga, agriculture and business. He co-founded Patanjali Ayurveda Ltd. with his colleague Balkrishna. He has also campaigned assiduously against government corruption. From 2003, Aastha TV has featured his programs in their morning Yoga slots and he has since become instrumental in Yoga's surge of popularity around the world. He walks the talk, living a simple life, eating only *sattvik* foods and sleeping on the floor. Despite being such a successful businessman, he owns no shares in his company. He is an inspiration to many.

## NANCY SUMARI



Nancy is a Tanzanian author, businesswoman and social entrepreneur. She is the Managing Director of Bongo5 Media Group Ltd, the Executive Director of The Neghesti Sumari Foundation and The Jenga Hub, as well as a published author of the children's book series, *Nyota Yako*. In 2017, Africa Youth Awards named her among the 100 Most Influential Young Africans.

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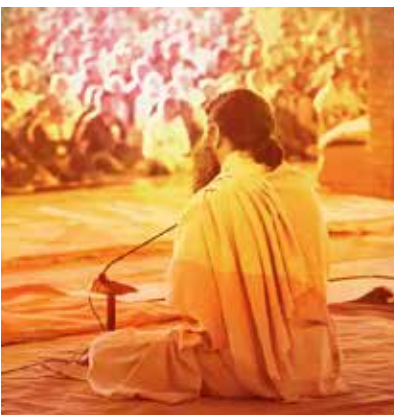
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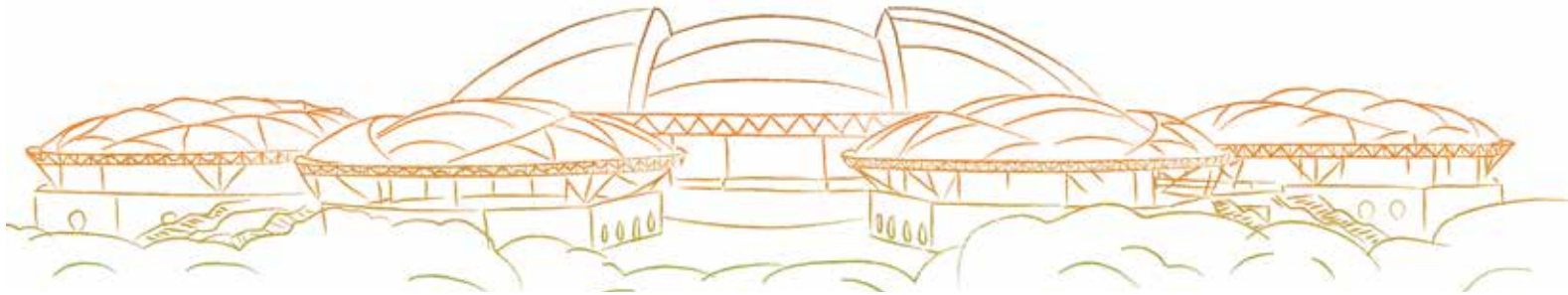
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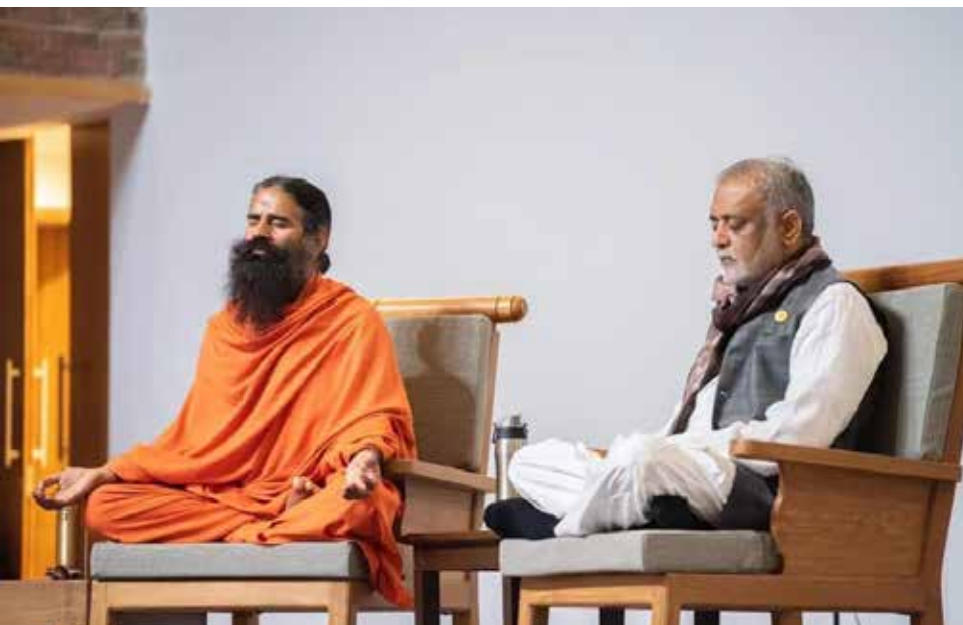
# The Ushering In of a New Era



**MAMATA VENKAT** shares her experience of attending an extraordinary event near Hyderabad, India – the inauguration of a vast new meditation center in honor of 75 years of Heartfulness.

On a cool, windy morning on Tuesday, January 28, the Hyderabad sun slowly cast its light over 40,000 Heartfulness practitioners quietly sitting together in meditation at Kanha Shanti Vanam Ashram. Heartfulness was celebrating

the 75th anniversary of its first organization, Shri Ram Chandra Mission, with the inauguration of the world's largest meditation center. This was to be the first of three separate seminars – the first from January 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, the second from February 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>,





and the third from February 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>. All in all, 100,000 people attended the three seminars. Seekers from around the world had been eagerly awaiting the arrival of this momentous occasion. In the days prior, they came in waves, filling up the newly-constructed dormitories with suitcases, laughter, and a readiness to absorb the subtle meditative condition that was pervading the dusty Indian air.

On the inauguration day, Daaji was joined on stage by Yogrishi Swami Ramdev, the co-founder of Pantanjali Ayurved. Swamiji Ramdev sat peacefully with Daaji as he conducted meditation sessions over the course of the three-day celebration, and also demonstrated his extensive knowledge of Ashtanga Yoga to the audience. He shared a few yogic techniques with

the audience, explaining the purpose of each, and encouraging the practitioners to utilize them in times of need. He later expressed his enthusiasm and joy to be part of the celebrations.

At the end of his visit, he said, “Though I am leaving physically, Shri Ram Chandra Mission will be in my heart, mind, and soul forever. And those who have not yet come to this spiritual path, they, too, will eventually find this because it is the very goal of life.”





During the second seminar, the ashram was graced by the presence of a number of government dignitaries, including the President of India and the First Lady, Ram Nath Kovind and Savita Kovind. A long-time practitioner of Heartfulness, President Kovind expressed his appreciation for the growth of the Heartfulness movement:

“I am glad to see that Shri Ram Chandra Mission has been promoting both individual change as well as social change. The Mission is promoting the great ancient tradition of

Raja Yoga, meditation in the modern world. This campus, Kanha Shanti Vanam, presents a model of holistic living.”

Kanha Shanti Vanam Ashram has experienced significant evolution in the last year, evolving into a beautiful and peaceful utopia that is enjoyed by all. Visitors not only have the chance to utilize the meditation facilities to deepen their inner condition, but they also have ample opportunity to explore each part of Kanha’s 1,400-acre grounds, including the Yatra Garden, many organic vegetable and herb

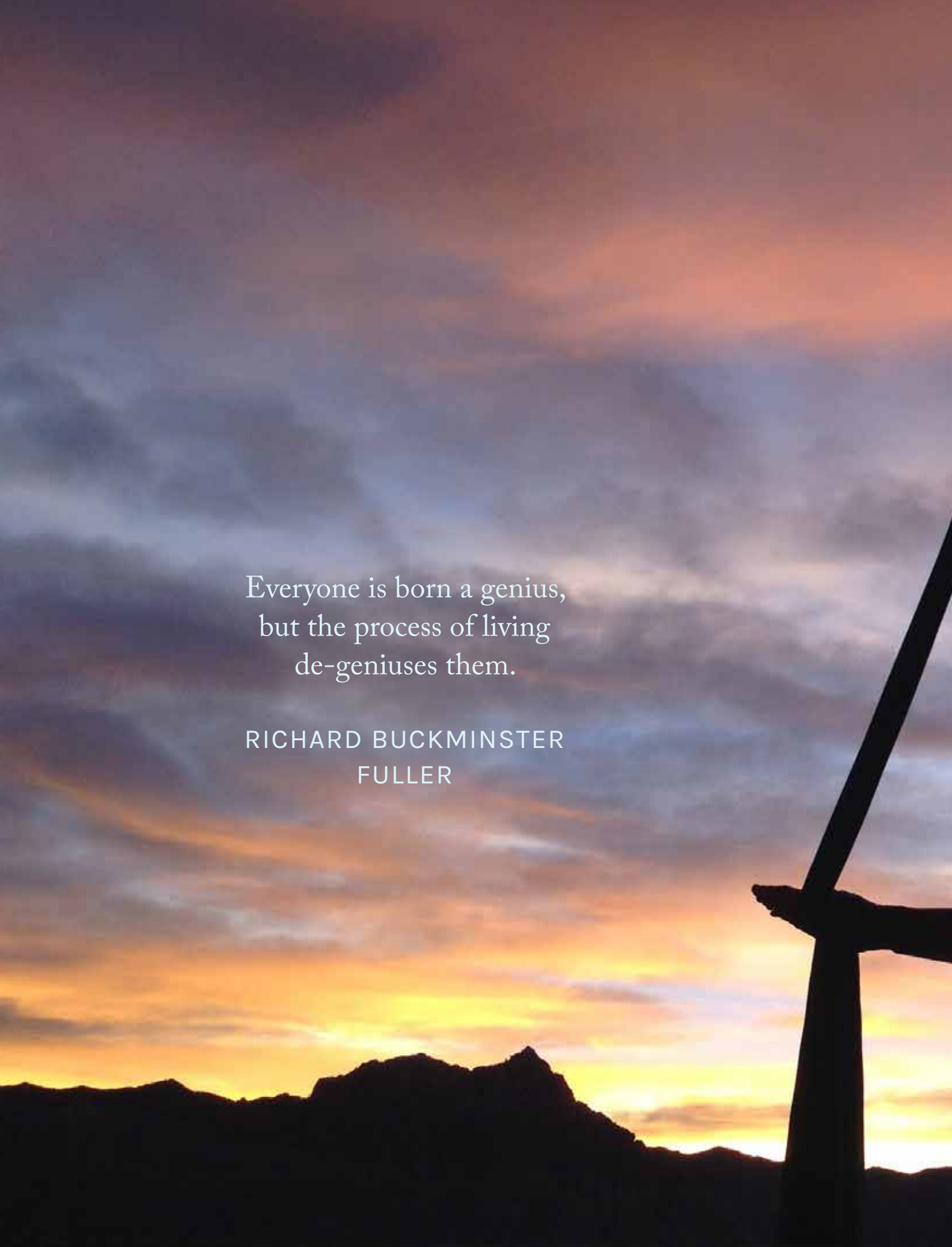
gardens, medicinal gardens, the HFNlife shopping area, Fausto’s Italian Restaurant, the extraordinary children’s playgrounds, the cottage industries, and Books & More, Kanha’s central bookstore. In the evenings, everyone was treated to musical performances from both classical and modern artists.



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A sunset sky with a silhouette of a hand holding a vertical pole against a mountain range.

Everyone is born a genius,  
but the process of living  
de-geniuses them.

RICHARD BUCKMINSTER  
FULLER



foccus

DISCOVER YOUR GENIUS



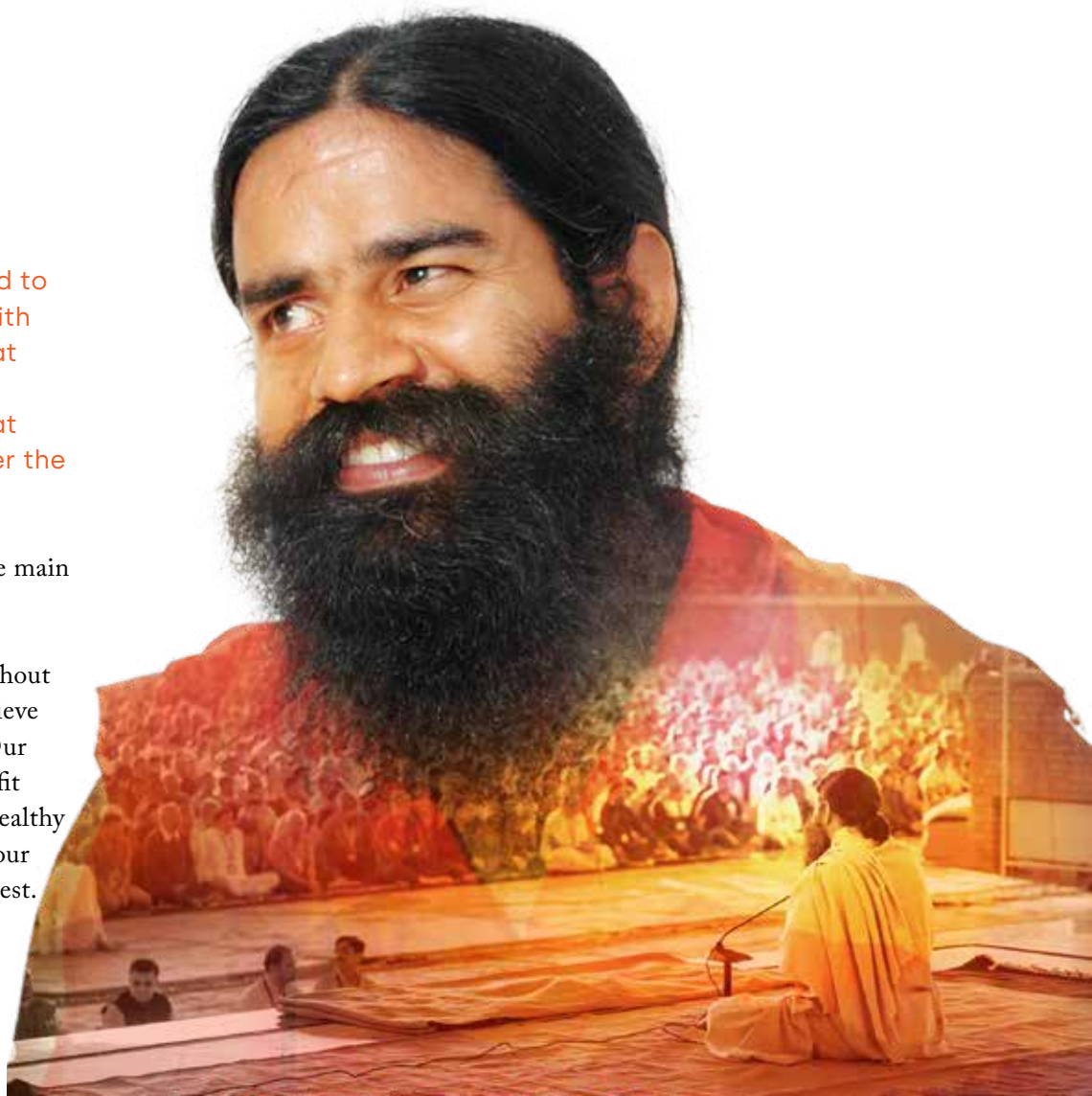
# A Silent Revolution

In January 2020, **YOGRISHI SWAMI RAMDEV** visited Kanha Shanti Vanam to celebrate 75 years of the Heartfulness organizations, along with Daaji and 100,000 practitioners from around the world. Here, **ELIZABETH DENLEY** interviews him about what he is doing for youth in the field of education.

**Q: Namaste Swamiji Maharaj. I am delighted to interview you today. With education in mind, what would you like to offer young people, and what does Yoga have to offer the youth of today?**

The youth today have three main challenges:

To maintain a fit body, without which we cannot fully achieve all that we set out to do. Our body has to support us. A fit body doesn't just mean a healthy body, it means improving our physical capacity to its fullest.





The second challenge for youth is to work very hard on the development of their mind and emotions, and ensure they are going in the right direction. This can be accomplished through Ashtanga Yoga and Heartfulness practices.

Ashtanga Yoga doesn't only promote a fit body, but through its eight steps it also promotes regulation of the senses, the brain, our emotions, actions, total behavior and character – essentially our entire life cycle is affected. We stand to gain all-rounded development through Ashtanga Yoga, so that our thoughts and our nature will be transformed.

There are so many obstacles in life which have to be surmounted to bring about inclusive and sustainable growth. In economics and politics we use two terms very often – overall and balanced growth which is permanent, inclusive, sustainable, non-violent, and full of justice, for our overall development. This can be realized through Ashtanga Yoga and the Heartfulness system, by fully regulating our body, mind, thoughts, emotions, and our very nature.

Life is like a seed: there are two types of seeds, bad ones and good ones. The bad ones must be squashed, and the good ones must be allowed to blossom. This is what we mean by purification.

**Q: Tell us about your education syllabus. What are you offering the youth of India with this syllabus?**

We have developed the syllabus for students up to Year 12. It includes different levels of Yoga practice, and we already have government accreditation. Behind the development of this syllabus is a single goal – that the culture of Yoga is imbibed by children in childhood and in a way that they can relate to, including physical activity. There's some confusion that Yoga is only about physical activity, but what is Yoga? Doing each and every action of our life, whatever it is, with purity, with perfection – this is Yoga. Meditation is different. Everything is not meditation, but there is meditation in everything – in your studies, your actions and thoughts, in everything you do. So, there is meditateness in everything. But to meditate is different – it is that which you do by

yourself. There is Yoga related to meditation, which is a solitary practice, and Yoga related to conducting your daily life immersed in a meditative state.

**Q: So you also include the character work of Yama and Niyama.**

Yes, they are included. Ashtanga Yoga is not merely one thing, not only exercise, not only meditation, not only breathing exercises, not only spiritual things. In Ashtanga Yoga the eight steps are complete Yoga practice. This is what we want to highlight.

**Q: So, this is what you do with students.**

For students' internal development, Yoga is absolutely crucial.

Finally, I would like to say that here, with the Heartfulness practices, there is a silent revolution happening – a revolution that will influence the spiritual life of the individual, of the country and of the whole world. This is a massive work in progress for this century.

# Where Do You Want to Be?

Do you have a strong calling from within? How can you convert this calling into reality? **ANJANA RAMESH** shares the pursuit of her innate passion – the challenges faced and the lessons learnt on the way.



When I was three, my mother enrolled me in a dance class. Be it the school cultural program, college fests, or outstation programs, dance has always been a part of life for me.

You don't quite realize the actual value of something you love until you lose it, or you are on the verge of losing it. When I started seriously studying at college, dance took a backseat. I almost lost it, for there was no time for dance classes or performances – nothing.

But this nothing is what actually drove me to find my something. I felt like a part of me was dying, and if I hadn't saved it back then, I would have been completely lost by now.

I took an overnight decision to pursue what I love. Dance had a completely different meaning that night; I had never experienced this bond that I share with the art before. It was an awakening, an inner calling, and that has kept me alive ever since.

With a busy travel schedule, performances every month, teaching classes, managing an institution, and studying, life has surely become challenging in a very beautiful way. There are no weekends, no partying, no socializing, and no 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. work timings. My schedule is unpredictable and physically demanding, but mentally I'm content and happy. Performing at different venues enables me to travel across the globe, meet different people and share ideas, visions and my art.

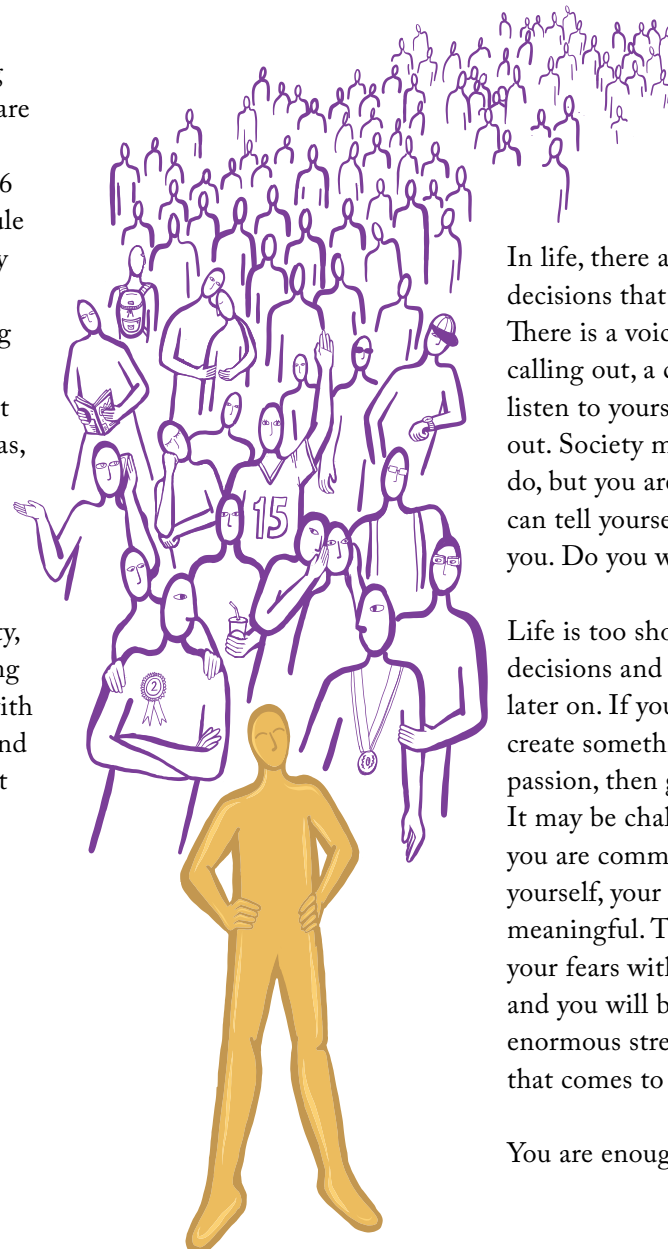
Teaching dance fills me with a rejuvenating energy, as my students are so full of positivity, happiness, love, and an undying enthusiasm to learn. I teach with an aim to have them understand the dance form as a whole, not just as a performing art.

But I never stopped being a student. I always wanted to study, and enjoy reading and learning new things. This innate desire led me to pursue a Masters in Fine Arts, and the course has changed my

entire approach to dance – my outlook, the way I dance, and the way I think, and the quality of reasoning and going beyond. Peace and quiet are things that dance brings. It is something I will go into at a deeper level.

The moments I cherish most are those when I dance for myself, lost in the moment, lost within. These moments help me explore

dance for what it is. It helps me identify with the inner calling and find a new dimension each time. I have realized that dance not only helps the dancer find joy, it is also a language that can help overcome stress, agony, and depression, taking the audience to another plane.



In life, there are certain decisions that you will take. There is a voice from within calling out, a constant nudge to listen to yourself. Hear yourself out. Society may tell you what to do, but you are the only one who can tell yourself what is right for you. Do you want it?

Life is too short to make wasted decisions and live with regrets later on. If you know you can create something out of your passion, then give it a shot. It may be challenging, but if you are committed and true to yourself, your life will become meaningful. Try overcoming your fears with your passion, and you will be surprised at the enormous strength and energy that comes to you.

You are enough for yourself.



# Your *Anchor* Lies Within

ANKUR NAIK



Despite studying engineering, I chose Yoga as a career, so that I could take the benefits that I experienced to other youth, and contribute to the development of our collective human consciousness.

To me, Yoga means to be free from the influences of the mind and to be in the here and now. It has many applications in daily life. Saying no to bad influences is easier on the days I am doing Yoga

than on the days I am not. Once you fall into a rut with bad influences, it becomes increasingly difficult to say no and come out of that rut. Yoga boosts my willpower to listen to the little bird inside me that always knows the right thing to do.

After completing my engineering degree, I was placed in the very first company that came for campus recruitment.



Everything was going very smoothly, but six months into the corporate setup I began to question the whole system. I started looking for alternative careers that were more meaningful. While exploring, I came across a postgraduate liberal arts program called the Young India Fellowship offered by Ashoka University. Having written the CAT exam, I had two options in hand: one was to choose the regular route of pursuing an MBA after engineering to climb the corporate ladder, and the other was to choose an off-beat path by pursuing a liberal arts education and exploring other options. I chose the latter and it turned out to be very soul satisfying. I met students from different streams of education, with different thought process, and amazing teachers. All this opened and stretched my mind to new dimensions.

At Ashoka, I met a Heartfulness Meditation trainer and my life took a turn for the better. I started meditating with her very frequently, sometimes twice daily for many days. I took many friends along also – those who wanted to experience meditation – and all of them had profound experiences. I saw the impact Yoga and meditation were having on other youngsters and decided I should pursue them further and get a deeper understanding. Coincidentally my trainer introduced me to the Heartfulness Fellowship Program, which has a Yoga branch. What more could I have asked for? I decided to go for it. And now the journey continues.

I consider that giving way to peer pressure and competition is because of a lack of self-worth, which happens when we lose touch with our inner self. When we don't have a practice that allows us to connect with our inner self, we easily fall prey to our shortcomings and negative thought processes, and that can be detrimental for growth.

Once we start going down the path of self loathing, it becomes difficult to be happy with who we are, and we tend to think of ourselves as underachievers. The education system and the society in this era don't help in this regard either.

In contrast, when you find something that allows you to connect to your inner self, you no longer look outside yourself for validation. You channel whatever it is that wants to make an appearance in the world through you. Once I started meditating, I could choose things that were good for my growth. I became more comfortable with who I was, and didn't need to prove anything to anybody else to find happiness.

We have immense potential to achieve whatever it is we set out to achieve. And given the state of things in the world today, I am interested in making wise choices that are good for us and for our progeny. Now!



It is our choices, Harry,  
that show what we truly are,  
far more than our abilities.

J.K. ROWLING







**thought**


**in action**





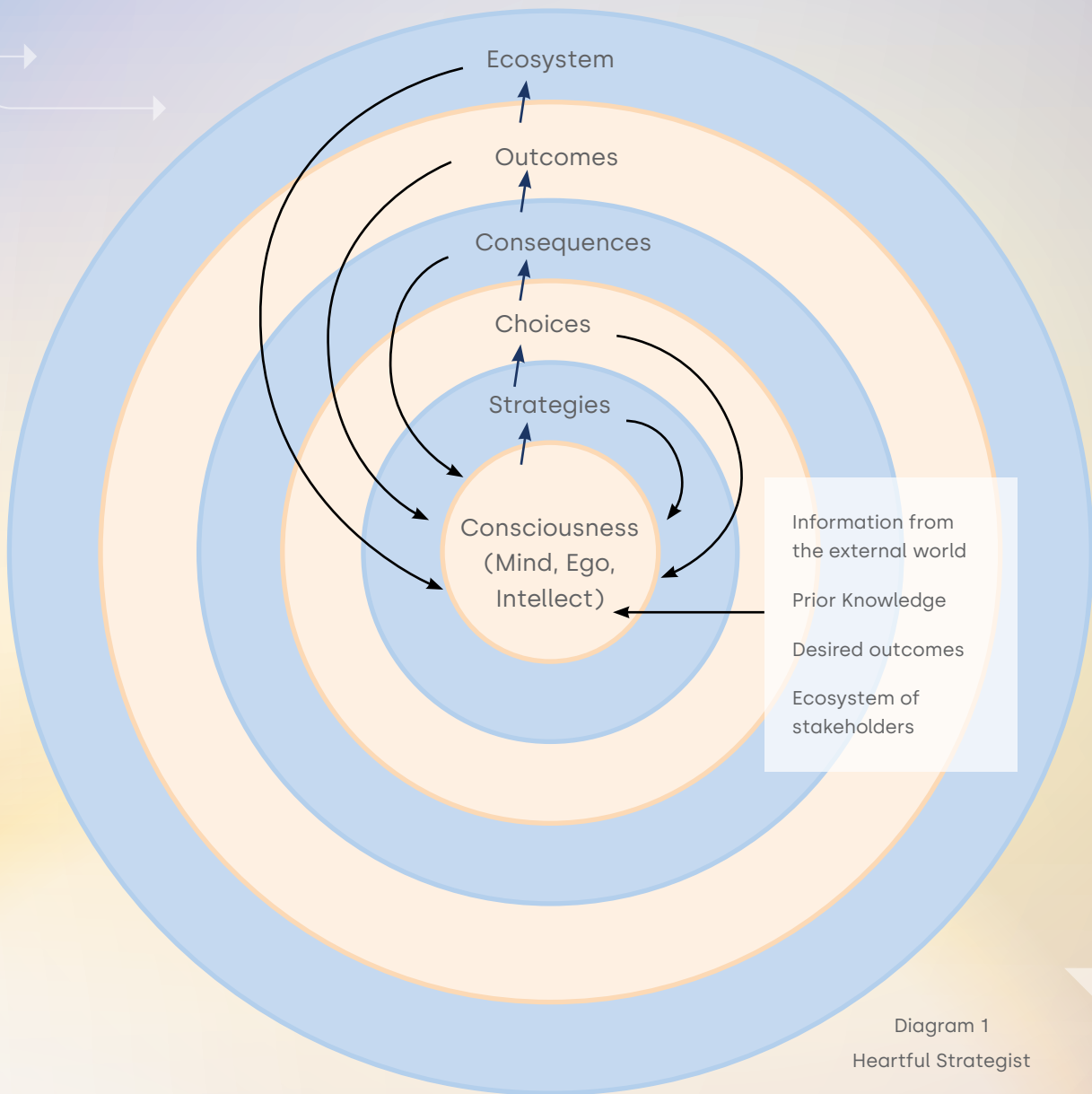
# THE HEARTFUL STRATEGIST

## PART 2



In part 1 of the Heartful Strategist, **RAVI VENKATESAN** introduced a framework to map how our consciousness manifests into strategies that have consequences and interact with our ecosystem. In this second article, we will explore three cases of strategic choices that illustrate this framework.





Let us take three cases of strategic choices made by leaders:

The first one is a strategic choice made by Pope Benedict XVI. He resigned in 2013, becoming the first pope in modern times to do so. The last pope who resigned on his own initiative was Celestine V in 1294. Many things were surprising about his decision. He gave up one of the most powerful positions available to humanity. He resigned knowing that he would likely be succeeded by Pope Francis, a man who had views opposed to his own in many areas. He resigned knowing that the church would go through significant reforms and transformation. His choice had significant positive consequences for a large portion of the world's population.

## THOUGHT IN ACTION

The second one is a strategic choice made by Henry Ford. In 1914 Ford decided to more than double the basic wage for workers. This decision was unprecedented and shocking. The trend in capitalist America had been the rich getting richer, and the lot of workers staying the same. Ford also reduced the price of his Model T car from \$800 to \$350, so that many of his workers could afford a car.

Ford said, “We believe in making 20,000 men prosperous and contented rather than follow the plan of making a few slave drivers in our establishment millionaires.”

His decision had significant positive consequences for many, and also made him a billionaire.

The third decision is a strategic choice made by Captain Hernan Cortes. He landed in Vera Cruz in 1519 to begin a conquest and his first order was to his crew to burn their own ships. Two years later he conquered the Aztec empire. His decision was not just surprising, it was one that took significant courage.

These were all big decisions, courageous decisions, decisions that had significant consequences for a large number of people, consequences that led to outcomes that impacted history, outcomes that changed ecosystems forever. What were the levels of consciousness that allowed these men to make

these decisions? Were they the same as the average person? They all achieved significant outcomes, but they were driven by different motivations, and operated with different levels of consciousness.

Pope Benedict’s choice was most noble, it reflected sacrifice, altruism and courage. The level of consciousness to make such a choice takes a lot of refinement.

Henry Ford was after all a businessman, and no doubt he sought ways to grow his wealth. However, he made a choice that combined his interests with the interest of his workers and ended up making car ownership in America affordable for common people, thereby changing his ecosystem forever.

Hernan Cortes was motivated by conquest. His consciousness was at a different level. His decision forced his troops to do or die in their battles. The consequences were again significant.

These examples illustrate the relationship between the consciousness level of one individual and how it flows out in terms of strategic choice, that leads to consequences, that lead to outcomes, that can change a whole ecosystem. In subsequent articles we will explore how a Heartful Strategist can work on refining their consciousness level to make strategic choices that not only benefit them, but also deliver the best possible benefits to the broadest possible set of inter-related ecosystems.

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# In Pursuit of a Dream

ALINE NICOLAI

I have French genes, but my appearance is the only European factor about me! I was born in Tamil Nadu and have spent most of my life in the south of India being chased by cows. I think I have had a very “blended” upbringing – a concoction of European and Indian influences that has shaped my worldview in a unique way.

My passion for languages probably developed first from the fact that I lived in a bilingual household, and also in a country where most people speak at least two or three languages. The environment

HOLA

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sharpened my ear to hearing, interpreting and recreating unknown sounds. When I started interacting with a sea of international people, it irked me not to be able to communicate with them in their own languages, and it seemed unfair that they were the only ones putting in effort to be understood. So, I started picking up any language I could get my hands on and ended up trying Spanish, Tamil, Hindi, Mandarin Chinese, German, Russian and Italian. I have varying grasps over these languages and it is tough to remember them when there is no one to practice with.

When I do have the opportunity to practice, I enjoy it so much, and when I don't have a class or language partner, I use websites or texting applications to practice with native speakers. I really need to feel the drive from inside to sit down, learn and improve myself.

My current vision is to work at the UN, a multicultural and multilingual environment. It took me a while to realize that I could use my passion for languages as more than a hobby, and now I'm ecstatic that this is a possibility.

I haven't really felt a compulsion towards any one career path, so I



don't have fixed career plans, and I am open to living in any country and culture. Given that, there is one thing that I know I couldn't do without, and that is meditation. Keeping that part of my life has proved challenging, especially in the West – being a 20-year-old who is vegetarian and doesn't drink is already enough to set me apart. I have had a hard time

balancing out that spiritual side with my everyday life, so much so that the discrepancy between the two has sometimes shocked me into stopping my practice. That isn't the solution though, as I have found that being less centered makes it harder to deal with conflicts and stressful situations.

So, although I don't have a specific dream to follow, I know it will pan out in time. I try to remind myself to focus on developing myself in the present so that I will be ready for any situation that arises along the way.



As teenagers, we're plagued with questions about our existence, but all I've ever known for sure is that I was created to express myself freely. At some point in my childhood I picked up a crayon like every other child, the only difference being that I couldn't put it down after that. My love for art later translated into a love for baking because I see cakes as edible art.

Both of these started as random flashes of inspiration, either from a book, a movie or an incident in my life, and gradually turned into a form of self expression. But it didn't start out great. I burned numerous batches of brownies, as well as my mother's favorite tablecloth, and once I dyed my cupcakes a sickly shade of green so that no one could bear to eat them. My hands were stained with paint multiple times and we once extracted dried glue from my hair.

# You Are Your Only COMPETITION

**DIYA MURALISHANKAR** shares her love of painting, baking and generally being confident in expressing herself and her feelings.







My art teacher was one of the main reasons I never lost hope in my work, even in the face of high competition. He saw something in me that I didn't, so I held on to that and trusted his judgment.

Tapping into my own potential has always been challenging, because creative hobbies are often accompanied by self doubt. However, it gets easier once you realize that comparing your work with that of others is pointless. Their work reflects who they are and not who you are. Every experience in your life shapes you into the unique person that you are, so your true competition can only be with yourself, helping you learn from your mistakes to make yourself a better person.

So be proud of that lopsided cake, that funky painting, because confidence is 10% work and 90% delusion.

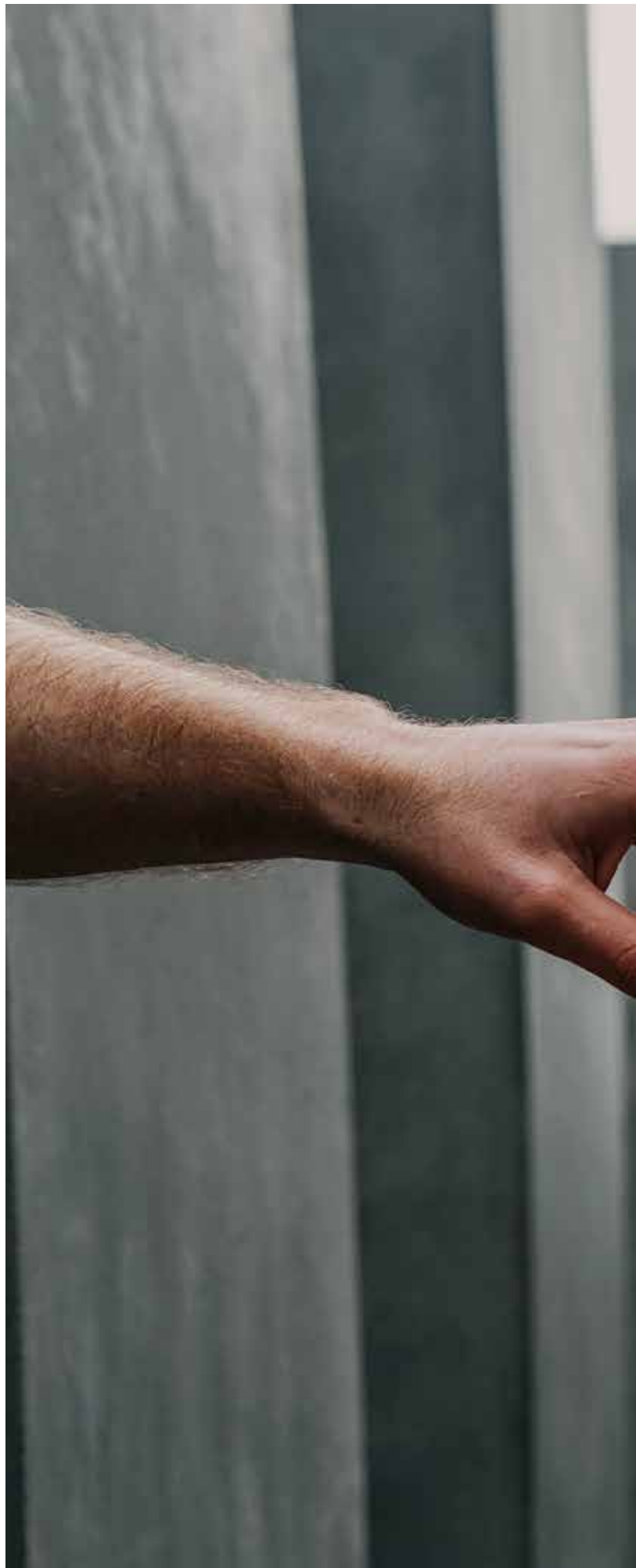
With some practice, art and baking went from being mere hobbies to a way of life. I found comfort in my brush strokes and satisfaction in the happy smiles of the people who ate my goods. Having just one hobby is never enough – the world is too exciting a place for that! However, all my hobbies, including art, baking and singing, revolve around creating something from nothing, something unique that portrays my individuality.

As I got older, doing all this for myself wasn't enough, so I started hosting Bake Sales along with a couple of my friends. We raised money for a charity that helps less fortunate young women of my age to lead a life of dignity and freedom by providing them with a year's worth of sanitary pads and hygiene products. As for my art, I started painting for my loved ones, because gifting them a painting or a sketch felt like sharing a piece of myself with them. I'd like to thank all my loved ones for keeping my artwork no matter how strange it is.



Nothing liberates  
our greatness like  
the desire to help,  
the desire to serve.

MARIANNE  
WILLIAMSON





# Innerview



# From Mediocrity to Greatness



**NANCY SUMARI**, former Miss Tanzania and Miss World (Africa), is also a published author of children's books, a businesswoman and social entrepreneur. Here she speaks with **PURNIMA RAMAKRISHNAN** as part of the GLOW Webinar series, on her roots, being crowned Miss World, the work she has been doing with children and youth, and the role of the heart.

Q: In 2017, Africa's Youth Awards named you one of the 100 Most Influential Africans. You are a business graduate from the University of Dar es Salaam and the managing director of Bongo5 Media Group Ltd, which focuses on digital media creation. You are the founder and the executive director of The Neghesti Sumari Foundation and the Jenga Hub that runs programs to teach kids from marginalized backgrounds how to do software coding. You are interested in improving the state of your community by working towards digital literacy for all. And your foundation has transformed learning outcomes for youth and little children through its digital literacy

programs and applying design making methodology to create value.

Today you are going to inspire all of us to break out from mediocrity to greatness. Welcome Nancy.

Thank you so much for having me, this is a great honor.

Q: Likewise. Tell us a little bit about yourself, Nancy.

I'm the third-born of five children. One of my parents is a farmer and the other runs her own hotel business, she's into catering. I had a very interesting childhood, I grew up on a farm and as you can imagine it was full of adventure, mischief, and just joy and love. My parents were very keen for us to get a good education, and to also grow up in a close-knit loving family.

I have very fond memories of my childhood.

Beyond that, I went to school in Kenya, graduated from high school and came back to Tanzania, and did my bachelor's degree here in Business. I hope to still continue with my studies at some point, soon hopefully. I'm married with a daughter who's wonderful. I feel like I've had an interesting journey so far, and I'm very thankful for that. But I often reflect and feel that it's almost like an out-of-body experience where I couldn't imagine having the love that I have right now and the work that I'm doing, the opportunity to meet people. To offer what I have been given throughout my life is something I'm very thankful for. So, that's a bit of who I am.

Q: Thank you. How has it been since becoming a beauty queen to becoming a philanthropist working for the education of children? Can you tell us a little bit about that journey too?

Yes, I think the journey through the beauty pageant was almost by chance. It was an opportunity that just happened to me. I suppose it was meant to be part of my journey, but it was a very big surprise, because I had just finished high school and I was hoping to pursue my university education at that point in time. By chance, at a local restaurant here in Dar es Salaam, I met a young lady who felt that I should be part of the competition, that it was a great opportunity. It felt like it was an opportunity, and when an opportunity comes knocking, I've always been one to make the most of it, so I did.

But beyond the beauty pageant, which was great and left a big mark on my life, I've always felt that it was my purpose to give back as much as I have been given. There have been many opportunities where people held my hand, where people helped me. A lot of people were there for me through my journey, to help me to be the best that I could be. They saw the potential in me. So giving back through the work that I do comes

naturally – the same way people have been there for me, I feel I should be there for others, and be there meaningfully. That's why our work in providing and widening the education emphasis in Tanzania is very important; education will unlock the potential in young people, so that's what I want to work very hard at.

Q: So, you have been part of these educational programs, and that has shaped your life. Can you tell us a little bit about the initiative of transforming children, of transforming the ways of education in Tanzania as you see it today?

The education system in Tanzania has a lot of challenges, everything from an outdated curriculum to not having well enough trained teachers, to the overall infrastructure. So, we thought to do something meaningful and long-term, but also to be more future-ready, and so we started programs that will empower and equip children with the skills and knowledge necessary in an ever transforming technological world. And so, our programs are focused primarily on giving children these very important skills, as we continue to work towards the fourth industrial revolution. Thus, although they

go to school with a curriculum that is outdated, they are able to gain skills through our hub and its program to allow them to be a lot more competitive. They are able to take advantage of the opportunities in the technological industry and sector, and then come up with ideas of value to serve their communities.

It's also about character building, it's about building self, about training children through values like being respectful, honorable, loving, caring, being of service, and knowing who they are and reflecting that to the world.





**Q: How have you been able to make this difference for children? What do you think is the key factor which can help them in decision-making and wisdom?**

I think we try to have a more holistic approach. It's not just about technology, because that's not enough. It's also about character building, it's about building self, about training children through values like being respectful, honorable, loving, caring, being of service, and knowing who they are and reflecting that to the world. I think what sets us apart is the

fact that we pay extra attention to character building, and I feel that is quite important in today's world to be able to build self, and acknowledge self, and another person. We have a saying here – it's from South Africa but it's also applied here a lot, and it is the spirit of Ubuntu. It speaks of the fact that you are able to see yourself in someone else or, rather, you able to see someone and empathize and acknowledge them, their self and their spirit, and just be equal in that sense. I think we're moving more than ever into machines and artificial intelligence and robots, but it's

really important to focus back on ourselves. This is especially so with children and young people who will be the force in the next generation. I think it's very important to instill these values in them.

**Q: When speaking about character building, what do you think is the role of the heart in transforming the child's growing process, in transforming the learning or educational initiatives?**

To be honest, everything starts from the heart, everything emanates from the heart and

## INNERVIEW

the soul. I think the heart plays a central key role in learning overall, in seeing our place in the world and what our world means. I think the heart is a window and a reflection of the world, and what the world is to us and what we are putting out into the world. A lot of the time, people are not able to be intentional enough when it comes to matters of the heart and learning, or feeding the heart. It plays a central and crucial role in learning, and definitely requires us to break down those walls and be able

to approach learning and each other more from the heart. I think that would change the world, to be honest.

**Q: Yes, the world can be changed if the role of the heart is understood properly. So how do you think children can be encouraged to use their heart as often as possible; how can we help them to learn this art of using the heart?**

I think we can definitely practice a lot more. Children look at the older generation as a mirror, like an oracle, and the more they see us applying this, constantly and consistently, that is one way to do it. It's like parenting – when a child is growing up, the first people they look up to are the immediate family surrounding them. These types of habits begin in the home, so I feel that is the game-changer right there – the importance of the role of the heart in the home, in the family. Then we move beyond that to schools, to education



institutions on all levels, and to governments, to how we lead our people. I feel it will be a multiplying butterfly effect. But it really does begin in the home. That is the most powerful place where values are instilled, where behavior is taught, and where love is shared.

Then it multiplies to all other areas of our lives, but it begins at home. We can all have a role to play when it comes to leading with the heart, teaching from the heart, and learning and feeding our heart when we are around our children and our young people. Then it will take hold. For now perhaps it can start in all corners where people who believe in it can start small and then multiply and take the effect within our circle of empathy.

Q: I totally agree with what you say, but when you look at our society today, we are becoming more and more dispersed. Single parenting is on the rise, parents are not together in many families, and even when they are together they have very little time with their children because both are working. Even the role of grandparents is becoming less these days. We no longer have families with uncles and aunts around, the joint family has



broken down or vanished completely, and we are moving towards the nuclear family and single parenting. Such is our age. When we speak about the family, the home being the center, where the role of the heart is nurtured, children spend more time in day care, in school where other people are primary care givers. So, how can teachers or the school impart this, when it cannot happen at home?

I feel that we can utilize a lot of these platforms that young people access. Reaching out

to teachers is very important, like you mentioned, because a teacher can use the first or the last five minutes of class to simply share whatever is going on in the heart, or hear from other people's hearts. We are able to reach out to a lot of religious institutions as well, for instance, here we have a lot of families going to the mosque, to church, and to the temple. They all preach about the heart but perhaps to break down the silos and have a more relatable approach is also important. It can be styled in a manner which young people find a lot more relevant. It needs to be dynamic,



it needs to be true to our time, and it needs to be reflective. It could be available on a platform that young people access, like Instagram or Facebook, or these social platforms that have a lot of traffic of young people. It can be packaged in a way that they will find interesting and then, before you know it, it's cool, and it's being applied, and it sticks, and it goes on and on from there.

**Q: There is a question from a participant: "How can this role of the heart help in breaking free from mediocrity to greatness?"**

I would say it starts with our own self. I think mediocrity stems from the fact that we are not able to believe in ourselves, be ourselves, and take advantage of our own purpose, our own journey.

The role of the heart plays a central role for staying true to our self, staying true to our purpose, and following our calling. That ultimately takes us then from mediocrity and elevates us all the way into greatness, because there is nothing greater than being able to walk our own path, heed our own calling and be the highest, truest expression of ourselves, of who we are meant to be in this world. I think being mediocre is turning away from that, turning away from the journey and applying something that does not necessarily fit you. I feel that the only way is to switch back from that entirely and take heed of one's heart.

**Q: Thank you Nancy for joining us and for your inspiring story.**

Thank you.





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**MARY OLIVER**









# *Roots of Empathy*

## PART 2

**MARY GORDON** was interviewed by **JUDITH NELSON** at the Spirit of Humanity Forum in Iceland in 2019. In part 2, she shares experiences from her own childhood to demonstrate how empathy develops in children.

**Q:** You talked about the generations and their effect on children. How important do you feel generations are – families, cultures – in helping children grow up in a safe society or safe place?

Well, children grow up in families. Lucky children grow up in communities. But not every family is part of a community, and your safety net only goes as far as your community net. So families do have the ability to give children what they need to grow up, which is unconditional love, recognition. Society is only as safe as the way we support our families.

I always look at: What are the policies in place? How do you cover vulnerability? The most important relationship in life, which is pretty much a template for every other relationship, is the parent-

It is the hand that un-mats the bubblegum in the hair. That is the hand you've got to hold. The invisible hand that really cares for and does the hard work of child-rearing, that's the hand we have to nurture. If you nurture the nurturer, you will have a nurturing society.

infant relationship. What are the policies that allow that relationship to be nurtured? Do you have a parental leave policy? We have some participants here from the United States, one of two countries in the entire world without a parental leave policy.

So here we have a gap or a disconnect between what we know from research, the policies we make, and the programs that happen. I think if we recognize the capacity of every person in a democracy to participate in a meaningful way, we need people to stand up and claim their rights in the society – the right to belong, the right to have a voice. And you develop those things in the family.

The university of the kitchen table is where you enable life. It's where children develop their values. It's where the wallpaper could tell decades of stories, the tears and the laughter, the capacity to enjoy one another, to see one another, to feel one another. And I think we sometimes overlook the power of the family: it is the enabler. When the family is in trouble, society is in trouble.

It is the hand that un-mats the bubblegum in the hair. That is the hand you've got to hold. The invisible hand that really cares for and does the hard work of child-rearing, that's

the hand we have to nurture. If you nurture the nurturer, you will have a nurturing society. I can't emphasize enough the importance of holding the family in the palm of your hand, and then the family will be the strength in the community. You need policies that say, yes, the family is important, yes, education is important. And if you get it right in the family, education is easy. It's challenging if you don't get it right in the family, and it is of course children who pay the price.

**Q: We live in an age where families can be quite fractured, and children are often brought up by single parents. Is there any help you feel children need in those circumstances? Or do we apply the same ideas and expectations?**

My expectation is that every child grows up in one relationship where the adult says, "I will lay down my life for you," and it's usually a parent. Research says it doesn't have to be two parents, it doesn't have to be a mother and father. It's about dedication and devotion and putting that child before yourself. It's wonderful and liberating to know that a single parent can do an excellent job in raising a child, but you must have policies in society to support that single parent.





Helping children learn to relate only happens when they can understand how you feel. They have to have empathy.

I don't think there's any one formula for healthy childhood development. I mean if you look at an individual child, they all come from a different basket. You can't order, "I'll have these traits please."

And then you've got epigenetics: the gene pool you're born with interacts with the experiences you have, to create the person who is. And shame on us if we don't orchestrate experiences for every child so that they will have an appreciation for whom they are, what they are capable of, and have the ability to reach out to others. I think we have a crisis of connection in society. If you don't have empathy you don't have the ability to be in a relationship.

I was asked some years ago by the UN on World Literacy Day to speak with the wife of the former president of the United States and two other people on a panel. I said, "What would you like me to speak about?" and they said, "We have heard that you said 'As important as it is for children to learn to read at school, if they fail to learn to relate we will have failed societies.'" Helping children learn to relate only happens when they can understand how you feel. They have to have empathy.

I think we live in an emotionally-illiterate world.



I think the secret to ending all the “-isms” in the world, the secret to peaceful coexistence, is to be able to see the humanity in the other. And this Spirit of Humanity, this beautiful concept, is based on empathy.

You have to learn to read “traditionally” to pull yourself out of poverty, but if you don’t learn to read emotions you’ll never learn to pull yourself out of isolation. And I think the secret to ending all the “-isms” in the world, the secret to peaceful coexistence, is to be able to see the humanity in the other. And this Spirit of Humanity, this beautiful concept, is based on empathy.

Q: The Dalai Lama has praised the work you are doing. Have you been inspired by him? And do you think there’s a place in the world at the moment for spiritual leaders?

Yes, the Dalai Lama is hugely inspirational. The lovely thing about being with him is that he is so present in the moment with you that you forget all the other

people watching. Apart from all his wonderful writings and philosophies, his capacity to be present and to connect to others is even more impressive. He invited me to a meeting in India and the meeting was on how we end suffering. He believes that we need empathy to end suffering.

Coming to your question about spirituality in the world, I think it’s an untapped source of power and joy. Sometimes we are so busy getting on with life that we almost miss the inner life. I think every person has in them the kindling to burst into a flame and to have a spiritual life which doesn’t have to have a name, a stamp or a brand. It doesn’t need to be part of a team. To realize the essence of humanity you can’t just put it in bottle and sell it. It’s something that’s incalculable, it’s something that



I think when you allow yourself to be vulnerable you can connect very readily to other people.

defies description, but without it you're hardly human.

**Q: What do you do to keep so happy and positive?**

Well, I'm pretty well deliriously happy all the time, so I guess I landed lucky in life. Coming from a very big family, where my dad gave most of our money away, it was multi-generational, so I haven't suffered in life. Most people suffer, but I really haven't had challenges, and I've had support. I've never been spoiled, but I've had support. So I'm very aware and appreciative of that.

Whenever I had a concern, especially when as a little child, there was always a lap to sit on. And when I was a teenager, there was always an ear. So I learned to be vulnerable and not to feel embarrassed about that. I think when you allow yourself to be vulnerable you can connect very readily to other people.

I have a very deep chasm of friendships, temporary and long term. I get a lot of joy from my family. I now have four little grandbabies, and my definition of a good week has changed. I have been



accused of being a workaholic, particularly by my husband, but it's not "work" what I do. What I do is joyful play. The world is endlessly fascinating and full of undiscovered treasures, usually in people, but my new definition of a grand week is if I get to give one bath to one little grandbaby. So wherever I am, I always try to get home to have at least one weekend day to give a bath.

I think my spirituality is through relationships with others. I don't have a formal spiritual practice. I grew up in a convent school, so I guess I had very traditional religion as a child. Every time I left my home, one of my grandparents (both my grandmothers lived with us) would bless me with holy water and say, "Jesus, Joseph and Mary, we pray be with us always on this day." So I got a kiss and was blessed. I mean, how could you go wrong!

I don't have that formally, but I have the essence of it. I have in my heart all the good feelings that came from that nurturing, which had a brand. I'm a "no-name" now. I've lost my brand, but I'm quite happy for that as I can fit in with anyone. I can fit in with a Sufi experience and enjoy and appreciate that. I have good friends who are Muslim. My husband's Jewish so I run a Jewish home. I can do Easter

I have in my heart all the good feelings that came from that nurturing, which had a brand. I'm a "no-name" now. I've lost my brand, but I'm quite happy for that as I can fit in with anyone.

and Passover, and I think it's all grand.

Students at the university would come to our house for Sunday dinner. On Sunday mornings, my dad would take one of us to visit people in the hospital – elderly people who had nobody to visit them, because Newfoundland is an island and there wasn't a highway. Those who came from far away for the hospital in St. John's had no one coming to visit them. It was a good chance for me to hang out with my dad, so I'd often go.

And my dad would say, "Now Skipper, would you like me to pray with you or would you like me to recite?"

We called all the elderly men "Skipper" because it was a fishing society and Skipper was a term of endearment. And my father could recite Shakespeare. "Or would you like the little one to sing a song?"

They would always say they wanted the little one to sing a song. You know, I would hide behind the charts at the bottom of the wrought iron bed and sing the song to the Skipper. It really showed me that we're all the same, whether we're old or young.

My mother would take me to deliver food, coal and clothing to people who didn't have them. She'd pack a couple of us in the

car and collect clothes for people and coal, because in those days coal was the way we heated the house. We would go and deliver them to people who had a lot of children, as we had very big families then.

She would be so respectful – she would stay and have a cup of tea with the lady of the house, no matter what the squalor, no matter how dirty the dishes. So if you were the child who was there, you would stay and have a cup of tea. I remember one time I turned the cup around because it was quite stained. It doesn't mean it was dirty, but I guess I was being judgmental.

Well, as I got into the car afterwards my mother said, "And Missy-moo, what makes you think you're better? What makes you think your germs are better? Do you know how insulting that was?"

I thought I'd been very quiet, but her point was that we are all a step away from trouble and it doesn't make you less human because you're poor, or you're sick, or you're old, or you're in jail. Why are you in jail? Because something bad happened when you were a kid and you got into a bad trajectory, right?



I think life is just about being in relationship. When you close the curtain on your life, you're not counting dollars, you're counting loving relationships.

So though I never suffered, I saw life much bigger than most children. I had a comfort level working in prisons when I was older. After school I would volunteer with the women prisoners and play Crazy Eights card game with them. I could go to anyone's home and feel comfortable because they were just like me, except different in their luck.

My whole strategy in Roots of Empathy is different from most organizations. You should see the business schools fall about in gales of laughter when I tell them what my strategy is. We've been very successful with no long-term strategic plans. I call it "strategic serendipity." If good stuff happens, go with it. If so-called good stuff happens and you have a sneaking suspicion it's not, don't go with it. It's not in any business school, but it works for me because what I have is a very good gut. I know a good person. I can't tell you how I know, but I can tell you there are a lot of good people here in this Spirit of Humanity Forum.

I don't work with anybody with whom I don't share a purpose, even if they want to give me millions of dollars, which has happened. And I attribute that to my childhood. Nobody taught me anything in particular. I was the middle child, so nobody paid me much attention, mercifully. I never had any huge expectation on me, but

I had a chance to learn from my father. The other thing he did was on Saturday nights: he would prepare an envelope, cut down the middle, for the church the next day. Half of it was to keep the church going locally, and the other half was for international donation. He'd take the globe out and say to whoever had come, "Okay," and we'd choose a place.

We'd choose, and he'd tell us about that place: "In that country they don't have democracy," or "There's great poverty," or "There are floods," or "There's famine," or whatever it would be. We'd find a charity in that place and he would make out the check, and he'd say, "Mary, you're not going to get your party shoes, because there's a little girl in India who doesn't have any shoes."

I never had new clothes ever. I had my sister's clothes and there was nothing wrong with them. I didn't begrudge it because I felt the money was being used in a really meaningful way. I had names for all those people – we created a whole scenario of who the money was going to – and it gave me the sense that I was this little "squeak" in a great big world of people who were just like me.

We did our bit. It allowed us to feel connected with a sense of empowerment that we could do a little bit of something. It makes you happy to be able to be



## IT CHANGES EVERYTHING

in relationship, and it makes you happy to volunteer.

I was surrounded by volunteerism all the time and never thought of it as volunteering. It was just what we did on Sunday morning – we went up to the hospital or to the old age home, and we delivered clothes. I think all of us were happy, because we appreciated the opportunity to be in relationship with others.

I think life is just about being in relationship. When you close the curtain on your life, you're not counting dollars, you're counting loving relationships. To have the ability without any effort at all, to have that learning, is a gift. It can come to you through suffering, but I skated through life, I must say. I never really had any suffering.

**Q:** It does sound like you had an incredible dialogue with your parents, and they were thoughtful about educating you in what really mattered. That must have been quite a privilege in many ways.

At the time I didn't think so! And sometimes looking at the globe and deciding "where," and learning about it, got a bit tedious to tell you the truth. But I had the sense it was important. And my parents – they weren't teachers, but they were "reachers" and they knew how to reach people – were both very modest people, who would be embarrassed to hear me saying this. They're both gone now.

There was a recognition of each person in the family as a person. I remember when we graduated from the card table (there were so many of us) to the real, big dinner table where we could be part of the conversation, we were not allowed to talk about people or things, so that the dialogue could not become critical. We could talk about politics, but we couldn't

criticize politicians. We also couldn't talk about people being ill, as my dad would have to leave the table, he had such empathy.

So we talked about ideas. It was a wonderful nurturing of children, to listen and to ask questions. It sounds formal, but it wasn't formal. It was pretty clear that when we came together, there was an opportunity to talk about something bigger than ourselves. Nobody thought they were important is what I am saying. And I think that's a good thing.





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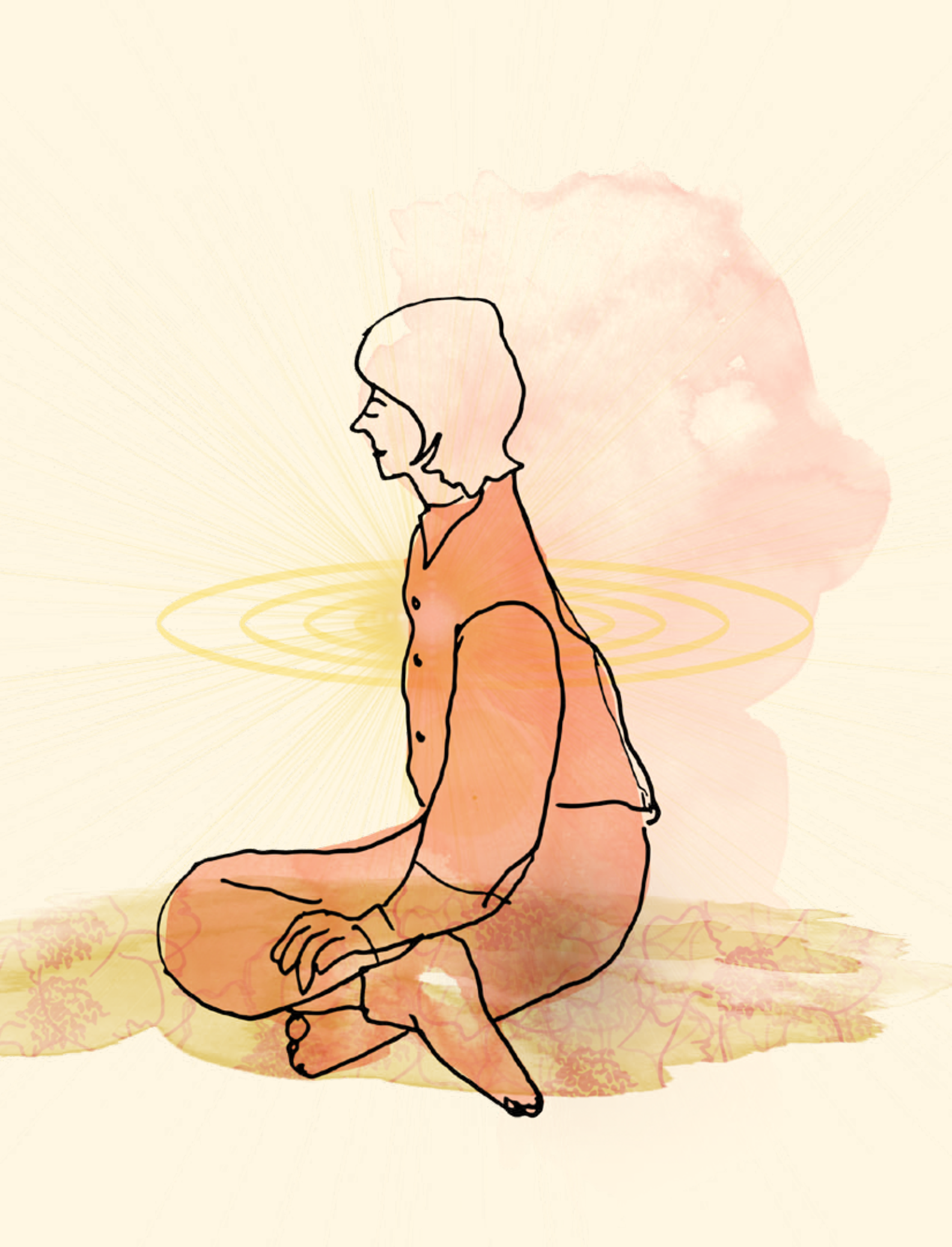


# *be inspired*

Prayer is communication.  
It can range from the superficial to the profound:  
it can be a simple conversation, it can evolve to progressively deeper levels of communication and, eventually, it can become a state of communion.

KAMLESH PATEL





# A User's Guide to Living

## Part 3

# UNITING HUMANITY

**DAAJI** continues his series on daily living and human transformation. In this article, he introduces the second universal principle of the user's guide – the science of filling the heart with love through prayer, the connecting link that unites everything in this universe.

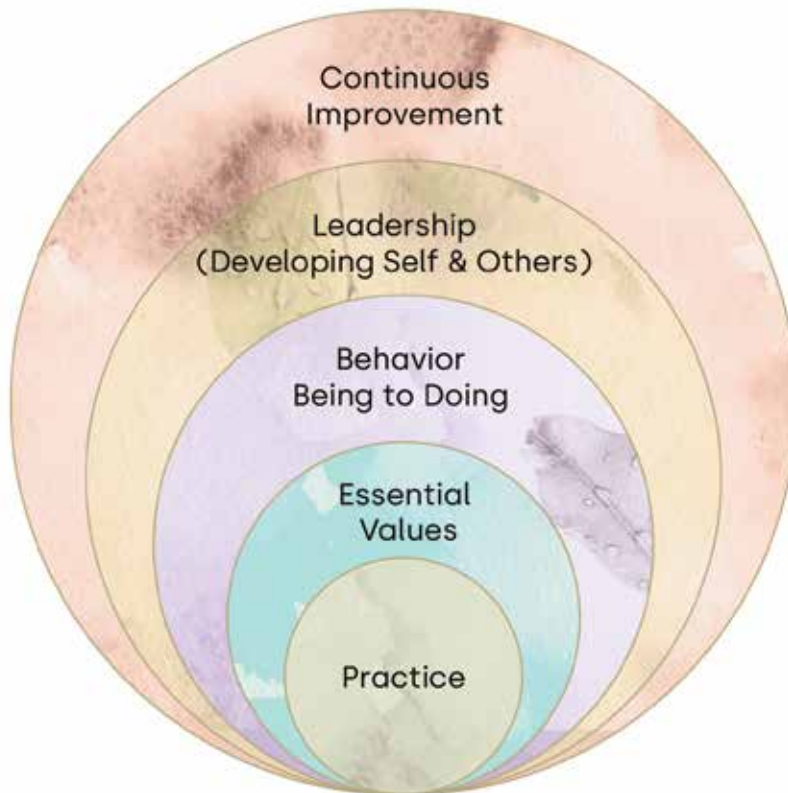


Diagram 1

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.

**ESSENTIAL VALUES**

**4**

Live simply to be in tune with Nature.

**5**

Be truthful & accept challenges as being for your betterment.

**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.

**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.



Around the time Babuji was writing the Ten Maxims, World War II was raging in full swing, taking in its wake tens of millions of precious lives. In addition to young soldiers on both sides of the conflicts, millions of innocent lives were taken as result of ethnic hatred and religious bigotry. Meanwhile, in India, the country was being torn apart by raging religious fanaticism. Pained by this mindless and monstrous atrocity of person killing person in the name of God and religion, Babuji declared:

“God is not to be found within the fold of a particular religion or sect. He is not confined within certain forms nor is he to be traced out from within the scriptures. We have to seek for Him in the innermost core of our Heart.”

Though his cry of anguish fell on deaf ears at that time, it has become one of the defining phrases of a universal movement that wholeheartedly embraces all religions and faiths without distinction. Babuji envisioned that the movement that started as a mere trickle would sweep the world and lay the foundation of a world based on spirituality defined by love and unity. At that time nobody could even visualize that many spiritual organizations and movements would come together, yet we have already witnessed this starting. It is only the beginning – this silent revolution is slowly and surely transforming human consciousness.

In Babuji’s experience, God is the ever abiding eternal presence in the heart of every being. Endowed with the faculties of self-reflection and awareness, we humans have the capacity to realize this presence within ourselves, and that simply happens by refining the mind by removing all the complexities and impurities that we have acquired. It also happens as a result of purifying the heart

of all desires and passions that weigh it down. To enable this, he created the Heartfulness practices of Meditation, Cleaning and Prayer. The second principle explains the vital importance of prayer, how it is to be done, to whom we should address our prayer, and finally what is the outcome and the end state of prayer.

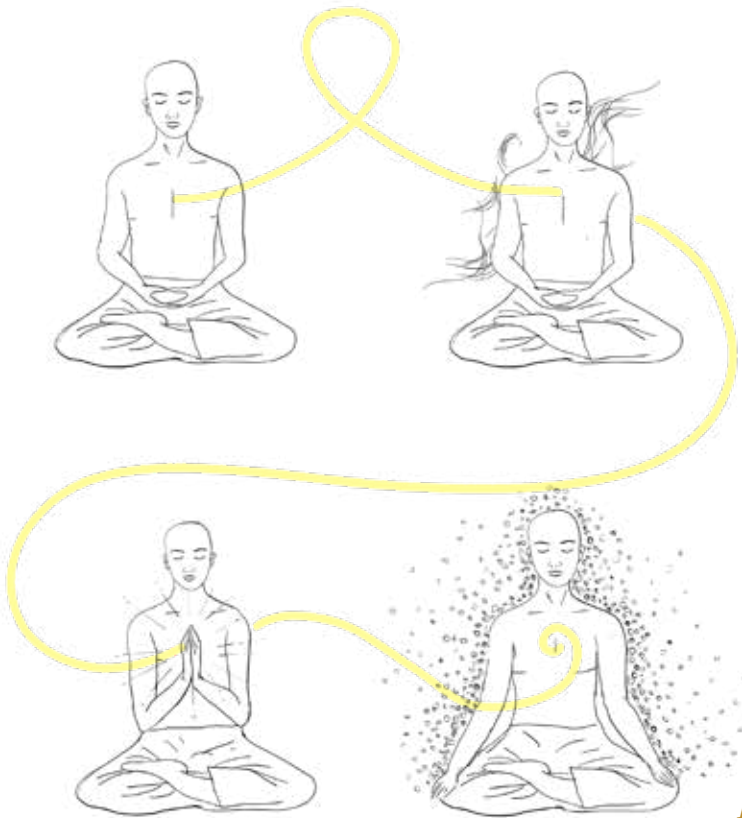
He summarized this second principle as:

“Begin your meditation with a prayer for spiritual elevation. Offer your prayer in such a way that the heart is filled with love.”

### *Prayer redefined*

In most religious traditions, prayer is offered to appease a deity, to ask for something, or to get protection from evil. God is seen as someone outside, sitting in some imaginary heaven. The spiritual understanding is quite different: The Absolute, the Source of everything, is inside us. In fact, it is at the center of everything, including every atom. Before creation, there was only the Source. When we emerged from the Source and took the present form, we started to identify ourselves with the material world, but that central point is deeply rooted within us.

In this context, prayer is a conscious attempt to establish a connection with the Source, a relationship with the Source, and to allow that relationship to blossom into a deep communion. This relationship then enables the flow of grace from the Source to the heart of a human being. It is devotion that creates the vacuum or pull that attracts the flow of grace from the Source. It is love that creates the relationship or bond. This bond is then strengthened by the closeness that



Prayer is a conscious attempt to establish a connection with the Source, a relationship with the Source, and to allow that relationship to blossom into a deep communion.

### *Making the connection and establishing the relationship*

is established by constantly establishing this link, which we know as constant remembrance.

In the Heartfulness tradition, our true journey is all about returning back to the Source, back to our original Home. This begins with the recognition, and gradually grows into a deep realization, that the Source is within us and we can become one with it. Prayer is an intentional act of communication or connection. The various steps in the process of establishing a permanent connection with the Source are: making the connection, creating the pull to invite Grace, and making the connection permanent.

A good analogy for understanding the science of prayer is telegraphy. This idea of connecting over long distances was the most advanced technology in Babuji's time. In today's world, connecting to the Internet using Wi-Fi could be a better analogy. Initially, you have to identify yourself, establish credentials, use a password etc. as you log in to establish connection. Once you have established the initial connection, it becomes automatic. So this first step is making your presence known and attracting the attention of the Absolute within. In other words, its is all about setting the intent.

Also, in telegraphy, electric current flows from positive to negative. Without that differential, no message would be transmitted, which brings us to the next step.



### How can prayer fill the heart with love?

In Nature, wherever there is a flow it is from a higher level to a lower level, or the transference is set by positive and negative polarity. Always a differential is required, as when two things are at the same level, there is no flow. If we can create a state of vacuum in the heart when we connect in prayer, the flow of Grace is imminent. Love fills our being if we create that state of supplicancy within ourselves, which means to place ourselves at the lowest level we can be. We let our heart become so receptive, so yielding. This tilt happens with devotion, the attitude or state of acceptance that the giver is the Lord and we are humble receivers. Devotion creates that vacuum in the heart which can be filled by Grace gushing in.

Imagine for a moment that, instead of love, your heart is burdened with desires and ego. What can enter such a heart? Any compromise by creating

more than one channel during the prayer simply dilutes our efforts. The entire heart is to be engaged in prayer; partial attention does not work. Wholesomeness of the attention of the heart, filled with love, creates holy feelings within. Our heartfelt attitude at such moments ensures our success in tapping into the heart of the Absolute.

A great poet once said, “O thou thirsty for the divine intoxication! Empty thy heart for the purpose, for the head of the bottle of wine bows down only over an empty cup.” This is probably what Lord Jesus meant when he said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,” in his Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. It is an attitude of extreme humility that creates the tilt which enables Grace from the divine to flow into the heart.

### Creating a permanent flow of love

Any relationship blossoms through frequent interaction. It is no different in our relationship with the Source, which is nourished by love. Love creates the bond. The relationship matures and deepens with the support of other aspects of the Heartfulness practices, for example:

1. We pray before we meditate in the morning, and this in itself is a synergistic combination. Prayer naturally directs the attention inward to the center of our being, automatically creating a state of inner withdrawal or *Pratyahara*. It facilitates *Dharana*, as our thought is already directed toward the Source within. In fact, we have already gone beyond thinking to a state of communion with



God, so *Dhyana* or meditation is a natural progression, and prayer has paved the way for *Samadhi* before we even start meditation.

Meditation then deepens that prayerful state, and the Transmission creates the next inner condition, expanding consciousness and aligning the mental faculties of thinking (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*) and ego (*abankar*) with the prayerful state of the heart.

2. Cleaning purifies the field of consciousness by creating simplicity and purity, so that it is progressively easier to connect through Prayer. There are fewer and fewer obstacles and blockages. Like a pond where you can see right to the bottom, there is no turbulence preventing the connection.
3. As we are able progressively to retain more of the state created by Prayer and Meditation throughout the day, it leads to



a permanently prayerful and meditative state. This is easily achieved by simple Heartfulness practices.

4. We also pray at bedtime, so that we sleep in that state of prayerful connection with the Source. The result is deeply restful sleep, which is rejuvenating and also of spiritual benefit. In other words, we make use of the time we sleep for our inner growth as well as the body's need to rejuvenate.

You were anyway going to sleep with a certain state of mind or mood, so why not with a prayerful heart? Try it and see the effect it has.

Practice with the right attitude and intention eventually creates a permanent state of prayer, which is predicated upon a permanent state of humility, yielding and complete tenderness of the heart. It becomes a state of constant osmosis with the divine Source. Such a person is a Master or Guide, so when we associate with such a Master we immediately feel the Transmission from the Source. We benefit so much by being with him, as he can facilitate this process of connection with the Absolute by removing the obstacles and directing the Transmission into our hearts.

## To whom can we pray?

The ideal is that we pray to the highest, the Source present within each one of us. Prayer leads to self-mastery, and yet to attain that state we also need to yield before something higher, and for that reason the Master has an important role to play to facilitate the connection and guide us toward the Source. So there is no one answer to this question. It must resonate with your heart, so that you feel the Divinity within.



In either case, the idea of prayer that Babuji has proposed is radically different from the prayer of traditional religion. It is a deep craving that we create within, a craving to be one with the Source from which we emanated, and which is still the very foundation of our being. It is a deep cry from the bottom of our heart that signals the Source to move towards us. We don't ask for anything specific when we pray. It is a relationship that is based on deep trust, an inner knowing that we are already That.

## How to pray?

In the 1940s, a particular prayer was revealed to Babuji from above, and it goes like this:

*O Master!  
Thou art the real Goal of human life.  
We are yet but slaves of wishes  
putting bar to our advancement.  
Thou art the only God and Power  
to bring us up to that stage.*

This prayer has four parts:

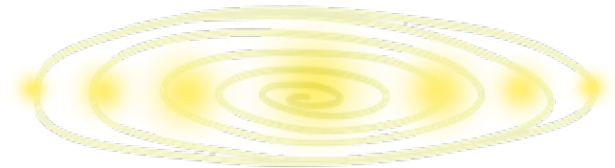
The first part makes it clear whom we are addressing – the supreme Master. This has a very deep meaning, which is important to understand. In all spiritual traditions, the Source is said to be pure nothingness. It is complete in itself. It is the beginning and the end all in one. It is beyond creation, beyond consciousness, and beyond the creator. It cannot be touched by anything. How can it hear our prayer and respond? Therefore, there has to be something that is in osmosis with the Source, and that is the Master – whether you experience it as the inner Master at the core of your Being or the living Master, the

Guide. It is the Master who responds to our prayer when it is a deep cry from the core of our Being. It is the Master who is the connecting link. This concept is difficult to understand and accept at the beginning of the practice, but becomes clear through experience as we progress.

The second part clearly states the Goal of our existence: The Master is the purpose of human life. This implies that we are not isolated individuals who are praying for our own individual evolution or personal salvation. We are praying for the highest state available to all human beings. We are praying for all human beings to become one with that stage. It is an all-inclusive prayer.

The third part is a statement of our current collective human situation. Our wishes and desires drag us down and put obstacles on our path. They impede our progress. It is a humble and honest acceptance of our situation. It is an enlightened perspective – we are not blind or in denial of our situation. It helps us to yield, to be supplicant. Our wishes and desires take our attention and focus away from our purpose, to become one with the Absolute, our highest state of being.

The final line of the prayer is a humble acknowledgement that the Master is the divine power who can help us reach that Goal. We cannot reach there only by the effort of our lower self, because our ego fails us. We depend on this higher Self to create the differential with our lower self. This also implies that we address our prayer only to the supreme Absolute to take us to the final destination.



The ideal time for this prayer is both before the morning meditation and at bedtime. The way to practice it is to say it silently a couple of times, and then try to get lost in the words – to go beyond the words to the feeling, the vibrations, behind the words. Let them resonate in your heart. We don't chant or use it as a mantra. The meaning of the prayer reveals itself over time, and is much more than the simple summary given above. That is just a starting point for basic understanding, and you are welcome to ignore that and discover the meaning for yourself through experience. You only need to accept what delights your heart.

Recently I witnessed half a dozen heads of reputed spiritual organizations in their special attires reciting *slokas* in Sanskrit, praying for unity and universal peace at the end of a meeting. But I had observed them arguing and trying to be more accurate in their articulation of the ancient scriptures. It made me wonder at their *sattvik* nature. Even while reciting those wonderful *slokas*, one can witness the arrogance of knowledge and position! How can grace descend in fully-packed hearts?



## Where do we begin?

Our relationship with our highest Self is an integral and vital part of human life, and hence the Heartfulness practices. Through simple prayer, offered with a heart filled with reverence, we connect with the Source of our existence and invite the attention of the Supreme. It takes practice, however, to reach that prayerful heartfelt state where prayer becomes automatic. Having said that, I want to draw your attention to the following quote from Babuji that brilliantly summarizes the philosophy and practice of prayer:

“When the world emerged into the present form, the central point was already rooted deep in all the beings. This being a part of the Supreme, it turns our attention towards the Source. In prayer we try to reach up to that point. This is however possible

only when we create a similar state within. This requires practice. It can be attained by resigning ourselves to the Divine Will, which is absolutely simple and tranquil. Apparently it seems to be very difficult, though in fact it is not so. It is not difficult for those who aspire for it. When a person creates in themselves a strong craving for the Absolute, they are indeed in a state of prayer and it is for everyone to strive for it. Whenever a person enters into that state even for a moment, their prayer is granted but it requires continued practice to accomplish it.”

If you read this with an open heart and a contemplative mind, and reflect upon it deeply, its essence will permeate into your consciousness and become one with your Being. Then, each time you practice the prayer it will reveal itself in magnificent ways. Remember, prayer is not a static link, it is a dynamic link, a lively link with the Source.

## A final note of caution

When facing worldly troubles, prayer is to be offered as a last resort. For example, if your sister is suffering due to a certain lack, would you compensate that lack right away, or would you pray and just be happy by saying that you have done your part? If you fall overboard at sea, would you only pray for help or would you also start swimming? So, prayer as a means of asking for worldly help is to be offered when we have exhausted all means available to us to solve the problem.



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# Meditate ... Listen!



**MICHELE DONGMO** finds her guidance from within. Here she shares her way of finding clarity, direction and purpose in life.



Focus on your  
deeper self,  
talk to yourself  
in a quiet way.  
Meditate.

As a curious mind, I like to research new and useful inventions with the help of technology. I like practicing meditation and Yoga, and I love dancing, singing and traveling. Everything that helps me to be useful to myself and others automatically becomes a passion for me.

I have had this deep feeling of knowing my origin to be not only at the human or physical level, but beyond. Having a mother who is as passionate about spirituality pushed me into it, too, and I began meditating in 2008. To me, meditation means constant change. It has helped me to accept life as it is. I still get angry sometimes, but more so with myself. It goes away quickly, especially when I use my practice to let go of emotions, or because of a strange positive thought, and my heart is always light, free.

Like other youth my age, I want to control my emotions, not allowing any external changes to affect me. When I come across difficulties, I try to find solutions, and when I don't find them I give them up to a higher power. Through meditation, I have learnt to listen deep within me. I stay quiet, I listen, and when clarity emerges, I decide what to do.



If you wish to follow your heart's dreams, I would ask you to do more research on what you want in life, and to meditate so as to know if you have enough passion and patience to fulfill your dreams. The heart never gives rough answers, but the mind might misinterpret the heart's response. So focus on your deeper self, talk to yourself in a quiet way. Meditate.



Taste of Life



Once the soul awakens, the search begins and you can never go back. From then on, you are inflamed with a special longing that will never again let you linger in the lowlands of complacency and partial fulfillment. The eternal makes you urgent.

**JOHN O'DONOHUE**



# Doctor of Happiness

## An Art Essay

SUKRITI VADHERA KOHLI is the founder of Doctor of Happiness, helping young people with depression and other mental conditions through her art and online platform. Here she speaks with **VANESSA PATEL** about what inspired her to open up this forum, and what a difference art can make to our well-being.

**Q: Hullo Sukriti, can you please tell us about yourself and your organization, Doctor of Happiness?**

When I started teaching, about 10 years back, I was interacting with a lot of young people. My students were aged 18 and 19, and I realized there were a lot of mental health issues in the country. Our students are facing a lot of pressure, and the pressure isn't just about studies, it's from multiple, complicated situations that young people are dealing with. To say that "College life is the best life" and "Youth is the best time" may not be true for everybody.

I began thinking that there has to be something that can be done for the mental health of Indian youth. I don't have a psychology background; I am an artist. When I was in school, I was also in a very dark space and art helped me cope, so the thought came to me, "Why can't I create a platform?" Before this, there were so many things I wanted to do but they never worked out. It took me three years to come up with the idea that art can inspire people. Can art be the reason for people to become hopeful?

So on January 2, 2018, I started my first online post and the idea was to reach out to as many people as possible. I also researched and discovered that there are a lot of artists working on mental health all over the world. They were doing a lot of dark stuff and I felt, "What is the point if I'm already in a dark space, and I see a dark illustration and I'm pulled into it? It doesn't help. In fact it

Rely on your  
inborn  
inexhaustible  
light within



*Submit.*

I make a conscious effort to make positive art. It is very difficult, actually, for a subject like mental health. I had to really rack my brain and research a lot.

pulls me back.” So, consciously I decided that I would not use colors in my illustrations, only black and white in a minimalistic way. I would say something very profound in a simple way, so that it didn’t complicate, it didn’t overwhelm, it didn’t create more anxiety, it was not *gyan*, only something which would bring smiles to faces. I make a conscious effort to make positive art. It is very difficult, actually, for a subject like mental health. I had to really rack my brain and research a lot.

**Q:** You use art to tell a story or convey a message. Your illustrations also have a quirkiness, although that doesn’t take away from the somber topics you’re addressing. How do you inject that little bit of light-heartedness and still make the point?

It’s really a big challenge, but I believe one thing: unhappy people make other people unhappy, and happy people make other people happy. To be



**MUSIC**

very honest, with the challenges we face in life, it's difficult to be happy all the time. To make art like that I need to become happy first. I'm a mother of a six-year-old, I have my family to look after, I have my work to do, so sometimes it's a challenge to make myself happy.

But I'll tell you one thing, the secret lies in dealing with daily problems. Because I cope with them I know how hard it is, and I overcome them and illustrate that. Whatever I'm dealing with I'm illustrating, so the quirkiness comes from the fact that the problems are there but I'm going to overcome them. I have illustrated many books, but for the first time in many years I have been able to use art for something that creates value in other people's lives.

My quirkiness remains the same, but what I create for Doc of Happiness is very profound. Sometimes, even I am encouraged by my illustrations – when I look at something I have made 6 months back.

**Q: I don't see your work touching on anything topical or political because that's an entirely different subject.**

Well, I want to work purely on mental health, but I do sometimes touch upon what's going on and how to survive it. For example, when all the protests were going on around the country, a lot of people with anxiety were not okay to participate. And that was seen as a sign of cowardice. I wrote a blog and so many people responded. I supported them not to let anyone convince them they were cowards. It was their choice; they could still be at home and support the process. So, while I don't really illustrate on those topics, I do have

interactive sessions regarding what is going on right now.

**Q: You're helping them to handle peer pressure because there is so much burden on the youth to be politically correct all the time.**

Yes, absolutely, and it is the need of the hour.

**Q: Your Instagram account tagline is "A Reservoir of Hope & Encouragement." How does this help you to connect with your followers?**

I wanted to create an online platform which is a reservoir of hope. And when I went for the recent Spokenfest in Mumbai, I had so many followers come to me – people with whom I had interacted through direct messaging, but who I didn't know. They told me that when they're in a really dark place, they search Doc of Happiness and look at

My quirkiness remains the same, but what I create for Doc of Happiness is very profound. Sometimes, even I am encouraged by my illustrations.



my illustrations, and that is their online reservoir of hope.

Nowadays we are using our mobile phones constantly, our eyes are always on the phone. So when there is a space like Doc of Happiness, which is not negative or gossipy, and it's not just humor, it's something meaningful, then I see that it is a reservoir of hope. It was the followers who told me this, so I only recently changed the description. Earlier I thought I illustrated to empathize and give hope. Now I realize that it's actually beyond that. There is a bank of goodness lying somewhere which anyone can tap into whenever they wish, like an ATM.

A lot of my followers get in touch with me through direct messaging and, let me tell you, there is so much loneliness out there. Even though

I also believe that with medical science we need some kind of meditation philosophy, some kind of support system. When we put both together then we can solve things.

they may have many followers on social media and many real life friends, deep down they feel very lonely. They don't have anyone to express what they're feeling.

**Q: There are more deaths today through suicide than from wars, murder and natural disasters put together. With depression becoming so prevalent, how effective is your reach amongst the youth? Is social media a legitimate means of seeking and finding support?**

I'm not a psychiatrist or a psychologist. I'm a complete believer in medical science, but I also believe that with medical science we need some kind of meditation philosophy, some kind of support system. When we put both together then we can solve things. Whenever I talk with someone who is going through a mental issue, I request them to consult a doctor. And because they trust me – of course I have to build that trust – they may approach a doctor. There are people who have started therapy as a result.

As long as Doc of Happiness is helping people overcome their fears, and removing the stigma, then it is working, even if it is online. My dream is to one day create a place where people can check in and really take care of themselves through organic foods, meditation, prayers and art or music therapy. I've never seen a place with this concept anywhere in the world, so maybe someday I will be do it, because nothing is impossible.

Young people are lonely and they're seeking. I'm learning every day that people are wanting help,

and they are waiting; they are not closed to the idea. I used to think people were closed to advice, but everyone is seeking answers. I conducted a workshop on mental health at a college in Mumbai. I told them that I wanted it to be an interactive session, so I encouraged the students to ask me questions about their mental health. Not a single person put their hand up. I asked them to take a piece of paper and write their question on it, without putting their name. At first, I got two questions, then slowly they trickled in, and by the end the session had to be extended. I realized that just because they didn't have the courage to ask me questions, it didn't mean they weren't seeking advice, or that they were fine. I know that people are ready.

I'll tell you a crazy thing – twelve top publishers have refused to publish my book because they feel it won't work. I wanted to make a book that costs only 100 to 120 rupees so that anyone can buy it. Illustrations do work. So, I decided to self-publish and started printing diaries. My orders are not stopping, which means that there is a real demand. Maybe someday the book will also get published; I don't know how long that will take but I'm in no hurry. I'm observing these things and really reflecting. People want to know, but publishers don't understand because there's still a stigma. It happens the minute I mention mental wellness.

That's why I responded to you, because I feel your magazine truly understands the need and knows there's a demand. It may be slow, it



People connect to real life experiences, people connect to things which are spoken from the heart.

may be at a snail's pace, but even if one percent of readers are encouraged from your magazine, you've achieved the purpose. If you save one life, you've done it.

Q: How much of your own life experience has led you to use this means of creating awareness and reaching out to individuals who find it difficult to open up about their mental issues?

**Attitude mirrors attitude.**



I have been invited to conduct workshops on mental health at various colleges and students usually message me or ask me to talk at these festivals, so one leads to another and it becomes a chain reaction. After my sessions, faculty members usually tell me that even they can connect with what I was saying, or they tell me to take a session for the teachers and staff. There is so much stigma attached to mental health issues that people feel only a psychologist or a psychiatrist is eligible to talk on the subject and they make it very technical and scientific.

I think it's about the heart. People connect to real life experiences, people connect to things which are spoken from the heart, and then I think maybe together we can remove the stigma from it.

**Q: In most parts of the world, women hold a secondary social status across all economic backgrounds. How can we encourage the women in our life to tap into their inherent potential?**

To me, it is paying a debt of gratitude to my mentor, because I have survived with the help of his writings and my art.

I had made an illustration for Women's Day in 2019 where I showed a woman peeping inside her own self and light is coming from within her. What I meant to depict is that we really need to believe in our own potential. All these years we've been conditioned to believe that we cannot survive in our own light. So, I think we need to tap into this inner potential, and start believing that we are capable enough to overcome anything. There is no other way. Male bashing will not help – we need to realize our own potential. We can keep blaming, but we must believe we are good enough. Also, I know a lot of men who completely understand, so let's not make it generic. I feel we need to look deep within and ask, "Am I enough?" When all of us are able to answer this with a yes, then we will overcome it.

**Q: You are a mentor to many people. Do you have a mentor, someone who you look up to and wish to emulate? What is it about that person that inspires you?**

I practice Buddhism and I'm most inspired by the writings of Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, a Japanese philosopher who is also an author and a photographer. He is somebody who has had many dialogues with people all over the world regarding world peace, and his writings are a reservoir of hope for me. So, if Doc of Happiness is a reservoir of hope for others, he is my reservoir because his writings point me in a positive direction, they show me what is correct and incorrect, and how can I improve myself, again through his life. So, yes, he's my mentor, and I have written to him about this platform. To me, it is paying a debt of gratitude to my mentor, because I have survived with the help of his writings and my art. Doc of Happiness is truly for him.

Instagram & Facebook: @docofhappiness





**EVA DU** shares her passion of connection, and her celebration of the joy of life.

# The Gift of today

Reading and writing are some of my greatest passions besides dancing and moving my body. Connecting with whatever is around – whether it is my own body or the natural and human world – is my constant passion. In spite of my frequent changing focus and interests in the world, the one thing that stays the same is making connections.

I love to be out in nature, in the sea and in the woods, smelling and talking to the plants and animals around. I also love to be with friends and other people, bringing unlikely groups of people together in exploration of themselves and the world around. I love engaging in fun, meaningful experiences in nature that connect people both inwards and outwards.





I make sure to take time to practice first for myself, whatever the hobby or passion. Often I find they are the things I do anyway, without needing to think, the things that soothe and bring me joy. Recently, and reluctantly, I started swimming first in a swimming pool and then in the freezing cold Irish sea. It helps me to release all my stresses and worries and returns me to the present moment, happy to be alive, well and breathing. It fills me with life again, reminding of what is important and why: Nature.

While I am still trying to work out my potential, all I have to say is to follow your heart's calling from the beginning, not after you've graduated, not after school, not after you're married. Start today!

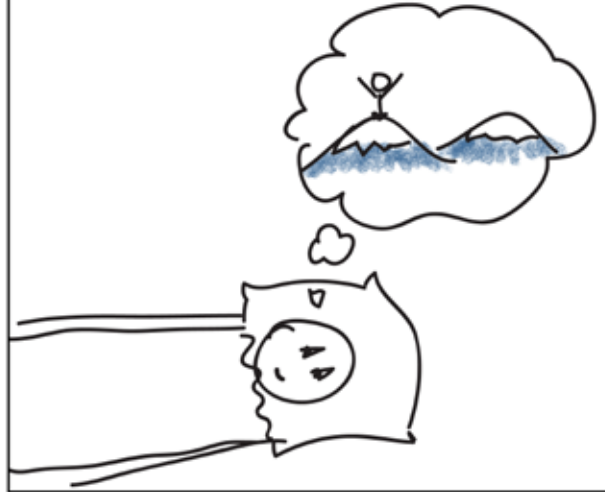


# Elsewhere

SO MUCH ENERGY IS LOST



IN WANTING TO BE ELSEWHERE.



WANTING MORE.



WANTING.



JUST BE IN THIS MOMENT



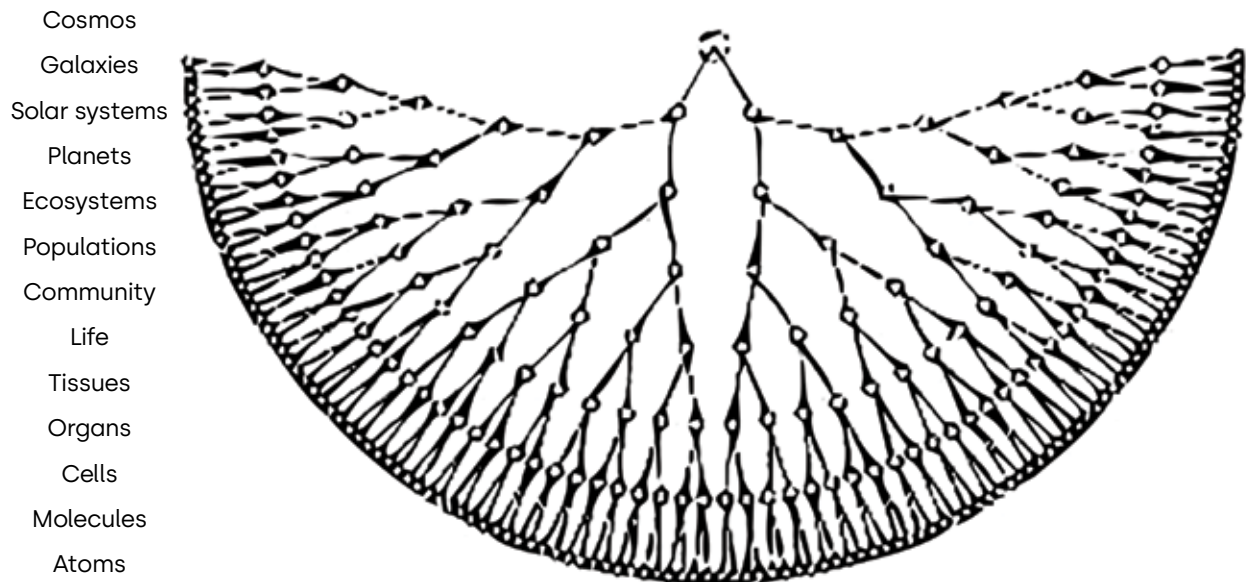
AND LET IT SURPRISE YOU.





# ERRATUM

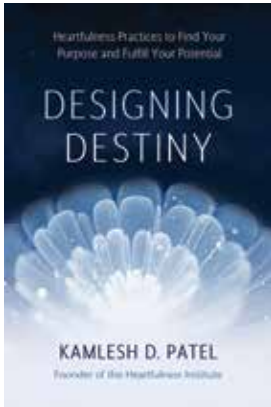
In the February edition, we regret that the diagram on p. 62 in the article, "A Hierarchy of Consciousness: From Atom to Cosmos," by Professor [MARILYN MONK](#), was incorrectly depicted. The correct image is shown here.



*Figure 2. A diagrammatic representation (an inverted ancestry model from Gregoire, 2014) of an interconnected hierarchy of increasing complexity in evolution. This is a binary model for simplicity – the number of atoms making a molecule, or molecules making a cell, and so on, is greater than two. It also shows a path of increasing complexity limited to eight levels, going through life forms familiar to the author (my own expertise is at the level of molecules and cells and differentiating tissues). Clearly there are many other intermediate life forms between the atom and plants and animals, which are not included here. A similar hierarchy could be created for non-life, starting with grains of sand.*



#1 BESTSELLER

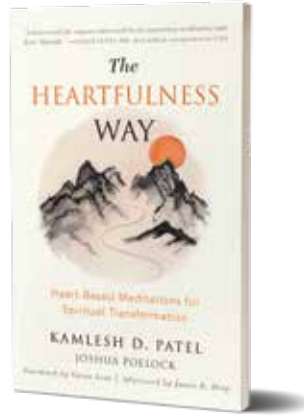


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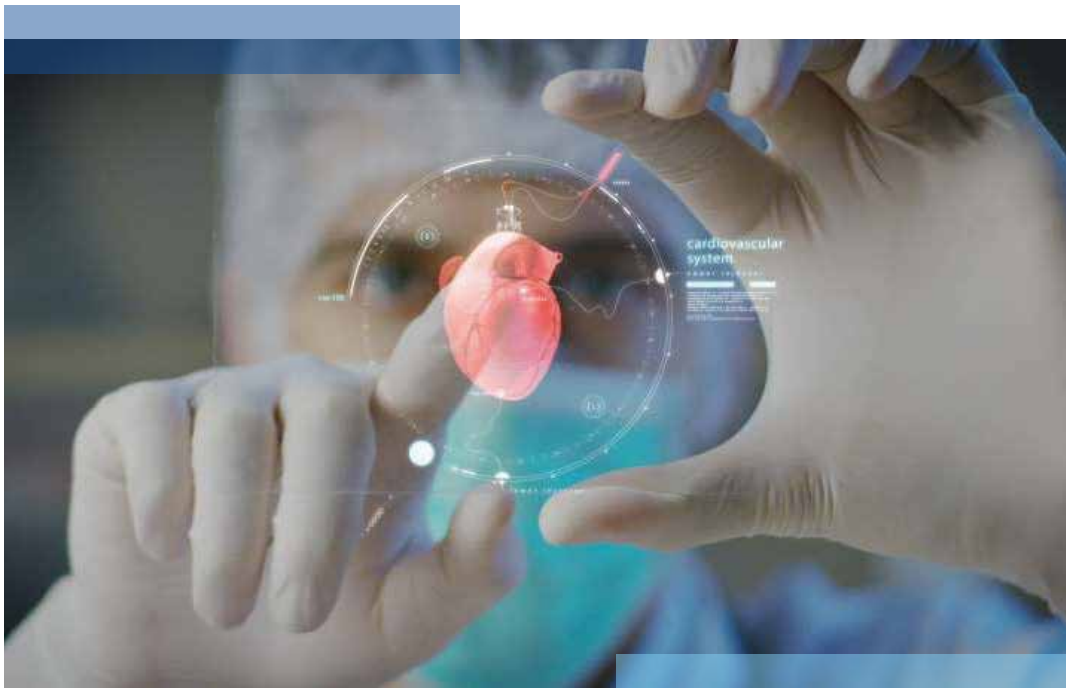
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