

May 2021

heartfulness

purity weaves destiny

Moderation

DAAJI

Women in
Spirituality

MIRABAI BUSH

Co-evolution

ZACH BUSH

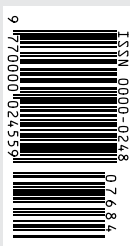
Well-being for
Everyone

KATARA

MCCARTY

Unity in Diversity

BRIAN JONES



Printed on TREE FREE sugarcane
paper by KRpapers especially
designed for Heartfulness.

Spiritual *Renaissance*

www.heartfulnessmagazine.com

Leadership is NOT a privilege for a select few!

Now more than ever the world is in need of EVERYONE to skillfully
and gracefully perform as leaders in all life contexts at all times.



Heartful Adizes Leadership

Learn to apply timeless leadership
principles in your personal and work life.

Heartful Adizes Leaders continually refine vital skills and equip themselves
and others with practical tools to successfully deal with complex challenges.

Price of the program is... U-priced!

These courses are offered as a gift, trusting the generosity of participants to
support the development and sustenance of similar in-depth learning journeys.



**MASTERING-
CHANGE.ORG**



Discover upcoming voyages at

mastering-change.org

Join us in this journey with a like-hearted
community seeking to lead to a better society!

CREATIVE TEAM

Editorial Team — Elizabeth Denley, Emma Ivaturi, Kashish Kalwani, Vanessa Patel, Christine Prislant, Mamata Venkat

Design, Art & Photography — Hélène Camilleri, Uma Maheswari, Gayatri Pachpande, Ananya Patel, Jasmee Rathod, Arati Shedde, Ramya Sriram

Writers — Ichak Adizes, Zach Bush, Daaji, Karishma Desai, Brian Jones, Victor Kannan, Paolo Lezzelle, Ramya Sriram, Ravi Venkatesan

Interviewees — Mirabai Bush, Katara McCarty

ISSN 2455-7684

CONTRIBUTIONS

contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com

ADVERTISING

advertising@heartfulnessmagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

subscriptions@heartfulnessmagazine.com

www.heartfulnessmagazine.com/subscriptions

EDITOR — Neeraj Kumar

PRINTED BY — Sunil Kumar

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

This magazine is printed on TREE FREE sugarcane paper by KRpapers especially designed for Heartfulness.

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

© 2021 Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation
Printing, publishing, distribution, sales, sponsorship and revenue collection rights vests with the Publisher alone.

heartfulness
purity weaves destiny

All rights reserved. 'Heartfulness', 'Heartfulness Relaxation', 'Heartfulness Meditation', 'Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation', 'SMSF', 'www.Heartfulness.org', the 'Learn to Meditate' logo, the 'Heartfulness' logo are registered Service Marks and/or Trademarks of Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation. No part of this magazine may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the Publisher. The views expressed in the contributions in this publication do not always reflect those of the editors, the Heartfulness Institute, or the Sahaj Marg Spirituality Foundation.

SUBSCRIBE TO Heartfulness Magazine



Available in Print and Digital versions

Order copies online: single, 12 months subscription and 24 months subscription:

**subscriptions@
heartfulnessmagazine.com**

Printed copies are also available at selected stores, airports and newsstands, and at Heartfulness centers and ashrams.

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



YOGA

for Unity and Well-being



100 days of Yoga

Towards the International Day of Yoga 2021
Practice Yoga with the best Yoga Institutions from India

Sessions online. Learn at your pace from
wherever you are in the world. Program free of charge.

March 14 to June 21, 2021

75+ Yoga classes

60 minutes - Yoga & Meditation

30+ Talks on Yoga

60 minutes - Yoga Lecture Series

Weekend masterclasses

30 minutes - Deep Dive Sessions

Visit us

hfn.link/yogaforunity
youtube.com/yoga4unity



heartfulness
purity weaves destiny





Spiritual *Renaissance*

Dear readers,

Have you noticed the spiritual renaissance that is emerging around the world? It is popping up in corporate environments, in our hallowed halls of education, and is even supported by governments these days. And it is contributing a sense of purpose and unity in a time of rampant materialism, allowing us to once again build community and a sense of togetherness.

Continuing his series on habits, Daaji explores the benefits of moderation. Katara McCarty shares her journey of offering well-being practices to marginalized women of color, and Dr. Zach Bush embraces the spiritual concepts of unity and diversity. Mirabai Bush pays homage to women as spiritual beings, Brian Jones unveils the magic of silencing the heart, while Dr. Ichak Adizes reveals that true success is achieved only through inner balance. Karishma Desai learns to find solace and joy in plants, and Paolo Lezzelle salutes the qualities of focus and balance in both sports and Heartfulness. Ravi Venkatesan explores the role of the mind in innovation, and Victor Kannan reminds us of the ten essential qualities needed for excellence in leadership.

Happy reading!

The editors

contributors



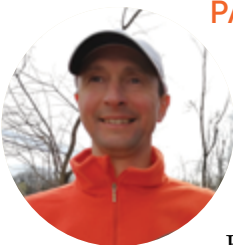
DAAJI

Daaji 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.



MIRABAI BUSH

Mirabai teaches contemplative practices and develops programs based on contemplative principles and values for organizations. Her spiritual studies include two years in India with Neemkaroli Baba; with Buddhist teachers Shri S.N. Goenka, Anagarika Munindra, and IMS guiding teachers; with Pir Vilayat Khan and Tibetan Buddhist lamas Kalu Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Gelek Rinpoche, Tsoknyi Rinpoche; and intensive practice in Iyengar Yoga and Aikido under Kanai Sensei.



PAOLO LEZZELLE

Paolo has been a tennis instructor in Italy for 25 years and is an international ATP coach. He has also been a Heartfulness practitioner for 30 years. His passions include physical activity in nature, writing and rock music.

KATARA MCCARTY

Katara is an entrepreneur, a leader in both non- and for-profit organizations, a sought-after coach, author, and podcast host dedicated to cultivating spaces where Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color (BIWOC) belong. She is committed to amplifying the richness of BIWOC and their stories, while also providing emotional well-being resources for them through her App, EXHALE.

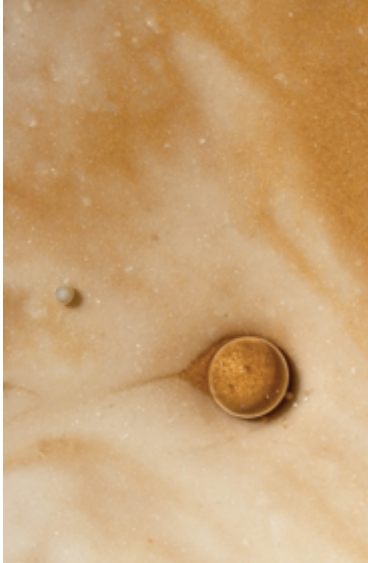


ZACH BUSH

Zach is a multi-disciplinary physician of internal medicine, endocrinology, and hospice care, and founder of Farmer's Footprint. He is also an educator and thought leader on the microbiome, as it relates to human health, soil health, food systems and a regenerative future.



inside



thought in action

Excellence in Leadership

Victor Kannan

24



focus:

Spiritual
Renaissance

Spirituality

Zach Bush

12

Exhale

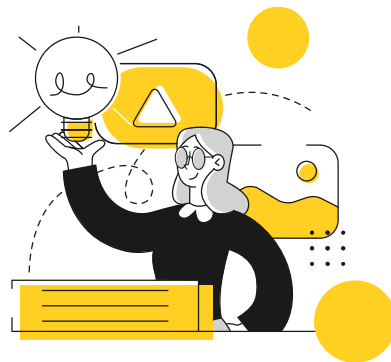
*Interview with
Katara McCarty*

16

The Heartful Innovator - Part 5

Ravi Venkatesan

31

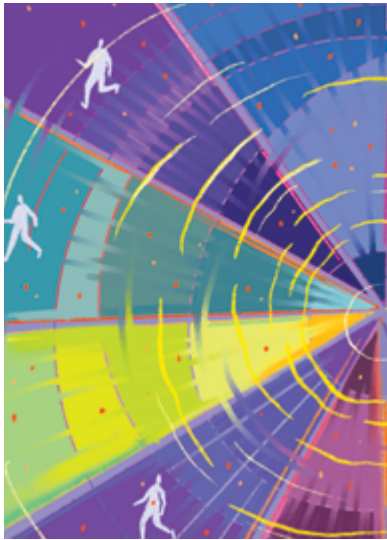


innerview

Women and Spirituality

Interview with Mirabai Bush

36



be inspired

The Art of Removing and Creating Habits - Part 5

Daaji

62



it changes everything

Unity in a World of Diversity

Brian Jones

52

What is Success?

Ichak Adizes

58



taste of life

Green Friends

Karishma Desai

72

Hope


Ramya Sriram

75

Heartfulness Sport - Part 1

Paolo Lezzelle

76



Unless there is a spiritual
renaissance, the world will
know no peace.

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD



focus

**Spiritual
Renaissance**



Spirituality

DR. ZACH BUSH is a renowned, multi-disciplinary physician and educator on the microbiome as it relates to human health, the environment and our interconnected future. Here he extends this worldview into the spiritual realm and the field of consciousness, so as to co-create a sustainable and regenerative future for all of us, and understand the role of humanity in the greater scheme of things.

Spirituality is one difficult topic to tackle as a human being, let alone try to be some sort of leader in it. I've never looked to my own experience or knowledge base to think of myself as a leader in any sort of spiritual content. I never really dove into spirituality thinking that this was going to be an area of focus for me. It's just percolated up through the rest of my experience and pursuits.

The deeper I've gotten into science, medical and otherwise, the more I find that the template of nature itself speaks to some greater design, some deep fundamental truths that are echoed from the most microscopic to the most macroscopic things we see us, from the tiny viruses that would inhabit a body to the universe itself. The scale is truly extraordinary. And in recent years, the scientific literature has introduced us to The Universal Scalability Law. That law shows that the mathematical scale between the universe itself and the tiniest particles we've ever measured in physics – the tiniest being the vibration of the electromagnetic field in a vacuum, called Planck's constant – is laid in half, cut in half in its dimensions by human biology.

What do I mean by that? Extraordinarily, we sit at the center point mathematically between the tiniest thing and the largest thing that has ever been witnessed by humans in the universe. Somehow, we sit at the center point, the event horizon, the center point of the universe, which means that as we look through telescopes out through the billions of stars that would make up our galaxy, and then past that to the billions of galaxies that would make up the universe, that telescope expands to the very edges of the universe. You would have to turn that telescope around into your hand or into your chest, and then look just as deep into that physical space to find the exact same depth, the exact same complexity and scale.

We sit at the center point of the vast universe within and the vast universe without. It must not be an accident. We have the ability to observe both, to be witness to both the grandeur within and the grandeur without. And for that reason, I think we're called into relationship with nature, not to demand something of it, not to control it, but to simply be a grateful and loving witness to miraculous nature, without and within.

We sit at the center point of the vast universe within
and the vast universe without. It must not be
an accident. We have the ability to observe both,
to be witness to both the grandeur within
and the grandeur without.

The spirituality I've come to really embrace is one of understanding of singularity and diversity, this extraordinary truth that it is only in our own self-identity that we can find our role and our relationship, in that singularity, to the entire universe without and within.

We stand at a powerful place in mathematical scale. We stand at a tipping point between the grandiose and the minuscule. We can manifest the very intention of life, which is nature around us and within us. I want human consciousness to rise, so that as we improve our understanding of human health and push the boundaries of longevity and reverse the chronic disease epidemics around us, we don't continue to participate in speed, the demise of our species, and the destruction of our planet.

The rise of consciousness needs to be such that we don't just improve human health, but come to understand our human relationship to the universe at large, inside and outside of us. I'm excited for us to have dialogues towards this end, in the medical environment, the scientific world, and most of all, perhaps, in the consumer world.

As consumers, each of us can see this world differently as we come to see our role. You did not show up by accident. Seven billion souls have leapt into these bodies at this moment in human history. We find ourselves to be at the tipping point, with maybe 60 or 70 years left of human life on Earth. That's an extraordinarily bizarre and terrifying fact. And yet I look at my children and I see the purpose and passion within them. My son is an engineer, brilliant in his excitement at co-creating in the universe. My daughter, so expressive in her creative capacity as a performer, and she is in New York City now enjoying this incredible culture of creative arts. I see both of them and I have hope. Souls are still jumping into bodies with great purpose, and a sense of joy, and a sense of hope for the future.

The spirituality I've come to really embrace is one of understanding of singularity and diversity, this extraordinary truth that it is only in our own self-identity that we can find our role and our relationship, in that singularity, to the entire universe without and within.

I have trust in the wisdom and expectation of those souls that somehow, within the next couple of decades, humanity's consciousness rises. And thus we can become the very pinnacle of transformation on this planet; so that we can be part of that solution-based transformation to co-create with Mother Earth for a sustainable and regenerative future for mankind.

We need to debunk the fear and guilt of spirituality that's been built into our religious constructs, and really come to see that we are all on one small blue dot in this vast expanse of vacuum space of the universe. We are singular here, we're singular in our homes, and in our opportunity to live in a healthy, cooperative environment with the rest of humanity, such that we participate with the greater ecosystem in nature to manifest the face of what we might call God, we might call spirituality, or we might call the Universe. We can be a part of that in a healthy and synergistic fashion.

I'm excited to continue to engage with all of you, so please get back to us through the social media environments, not just to reach me but to reach all of us who would be drawn to an environment like this. Be inspired to think collectively together in a new fashion so that we overcome the fear and guilt and the psychosis of our political structures, our social structures, our religious structures, and really start to understand humanity and its proper position in the universe itself.

www.zachbushmd.com

<https://www.instagram.com/zachbushmd>

The rise of consciousness needs to be such that we don't just improve human health, but come to understand our human relationship to the universe at large, inside and outside of us. I'm excited for us to have dialogues towards this end, in the medical environment, the scientific world, and most of all, perhaps, in the consumer world.



Exhale



Photo credit: KATARAMCCARTY.COM

KATARA MCCARTY is the source and inspiration for EXHALE, a well-being App for Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color. In December 2020, she was interviewed by **MAMATA VENKAT** about her life-long journey creating resources for some of the most marginalized people in society, and her approach to spirituality.

Q: I want to make sure I'm pronouncing your name correctly. It's [kuh-TAH-ruh]?

Yes! How do I pronounce your name?

Q: [MUH-muh-thuh]

I remember the first days of school, when they would come across my name. I would know that I was next because the teachers would pause, look at the list, and dodge it. You can probably totally

relate. I remember being little and having to teach my teachers how to say my name. My whole life.

Q: That has been me my whole life. Inevitably someone follows up with, "Can I give you a nickname?" And I always say, "No! Learn how to say my name. It's not that difficult."

This has been a very interesting year, a very difficult year for the Black community. How are you doing?

With the pandemic, there was so much uncertainty in the beginning, and being quarantined I lost over half my clientele. I'm a public speaker and all events were halted. I also coach companies and organizations. In a couple of the companies, I was the first thing to be cut, because they were trying to stop the internal bleeding. I felt a lot of anxiety and uncertainty, and then what was happening with COVID in the Black community was really, really stressful.

Q: I know a lot about the last eight or nine months, but over the last few years what has really influenced you now in your career? I would love to hear about the origins.

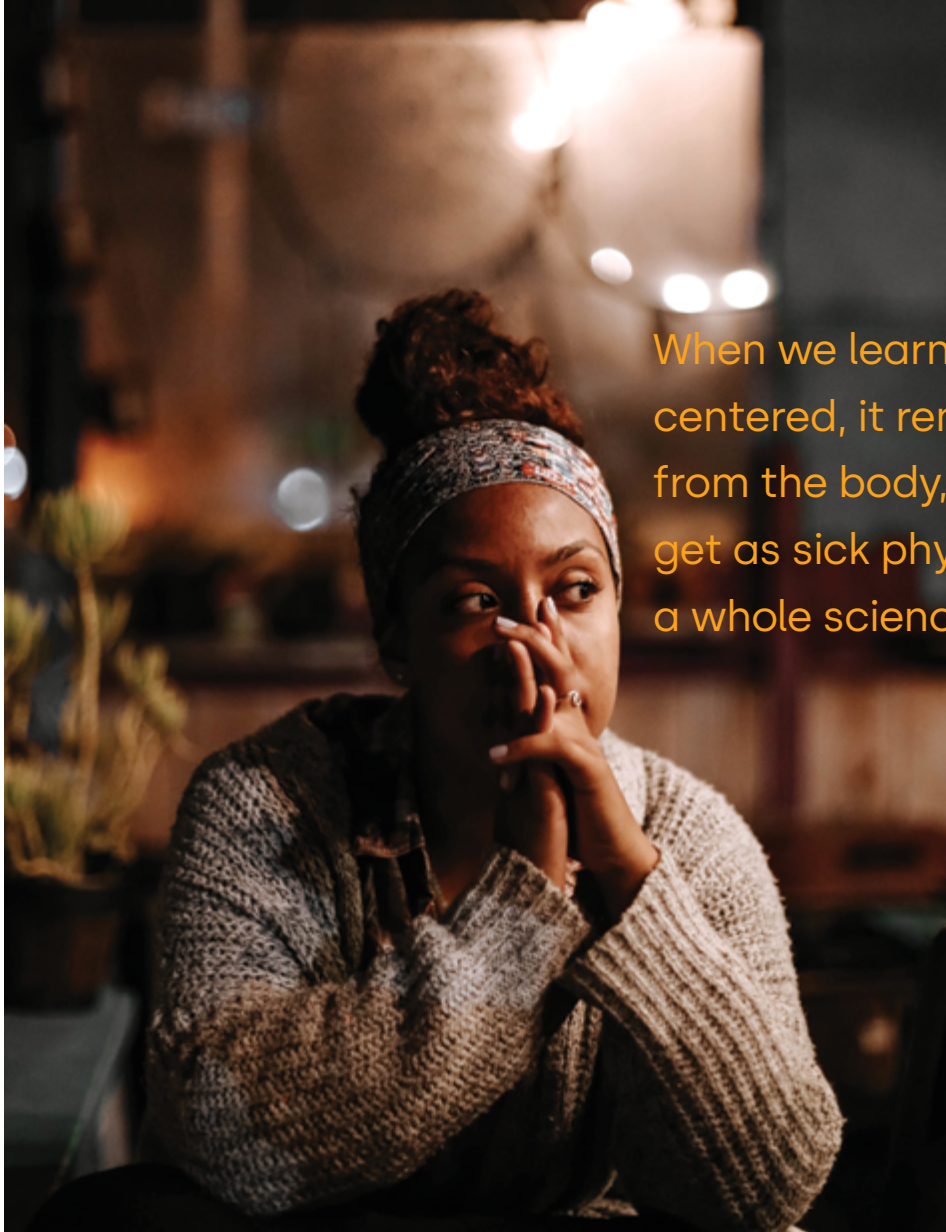
I spent a lot of my adult life partnering with my husband. We launched a non-profit organization in our small town here in Indiana – after-school programs for some of the most marginalized under-represented, under-served kids in our community. We also built a school in Zambia, Africa. That work, which I did for eighteen years, was about showing up for those who were on the margins of society. Then, I became a certified coach and started my coaching practice and public speaking. While I was getting certified, I was the

Director of Culture for one of the largest Verizon Wireless retailers in the nation. After being there for a few years, I then started my own practice. So first it was nonprofit, then the corporate world, and then I started my own practice coaching individuals.

In 2019, people started approaching me to speak on diversity and inclusion, and my message was, "We can't have true diversity and equity unless we really focus on inclusion." What does that look like? I have challenged folks not to only check a box with the number of Black and Brown people of color working for them, not to only invite them to the table, but to give them a seat and give them an opportunity to speak and listen to them.

When I looked at my roster, I remember sharing with my husband and my girls, "I feel like I've drifted away from my core values." While I was still delivering a message for people on the margins, I was no longer working with them. I wasn't in the neighborhood anymore. I wasn't with the families anymore. And while I was building my practice, it wasn't really aligning with my values.

So I began sitting with myself and asking: "Wait! How did you get here? This is not where you want to be. You need to pivot some things." I started thinking of ways to offer my services and my coaching to Black people, Brown people, and then COVID hit and we were quarantined, so I lost all my previous clients anyway. I thought, "Okay. I think the universe has done it in a funky way, not that it was ordained. All my clients are pretty much gone. So what now?" This was an opportunity for me to truly pivot.



When we learn to be centered, it removes stress from the body, so we won't get as sick physically. There's a whole science to it.

To manage my stress, I was reaching for Apps, but it felt like a disconnect. I asked myself, “How can I show up in my community? I have time now. My clientele has been washed away and I have a clean slate. I’m available! I have resources that can help. What can I do?”

I remember being invited to a Zoom call with a lot of community leaders – political leaders, civic leaders, social justice leaders, and artists from the rap community. I asked myself, “Katara, what can you do?” over the next few days. Then one day I went to meditate without an App in my basement, focusing on my breath, and the idea came, “Katara, what if you use the tools and resources that

you give your clients – advocating for them to prioritize emotional well-being – and put them in an App that is easily accessible and specific to Women of Color, some of these most marginalized folks in our community?” And that includes folks who are gender nonconforming, non-binary, LGBTQIA+. What if you create something that will help them manage their stress, their anxiety, their trauma, from regular life, and also those stresses compounded by systemic racism? So the idea for the App came. I knew immediately that I wanted to name it “EXHALE,” because I feel like that’s been our cry for 400 years. Because of racism, we can’t breathe.

My experience is that when we learn to connect back to our breath, we can remove stress from our bodies, we can remove anxiety from our bodies. We can't control out there, what's going to happen when we walk out the front door, but we can control our breath. When we learn to be centered, it removes stress from the body, so we won't get as sick physically. There's a whole science to it. I wanted to give my community a resource to exhale and breathe, to find our breath, because there's power in our breath.

Q: Obviously, wellness is important to you, and that's what you want to give back to your community. It makes me curious to know: What was your first experience with meditation? How has it helped you in everyday life, and also in dealing with the immensity of everything that's going on right now? What has driven you to help people understand how beneficial meditation is in bringing a sense of solace and inner peace?

It really started in my early twenties. I'm 48 now. I was pregnant when I was 19 and had my daughter when I was 20. When they put her in my arms, everything, everybody disappeared in that moment except for her and me. I was so young, and I remember really having a spiritual moment. It was an awakening for me. In that moment I knew I had to shift my life. It was a moment where I thought, "Oh man, I've got this baby. I mean, she's a newborn, I'm holding her." You know when they open their eyes and they're cute and you're just like, "Oh my God, this is a real being!" And I remember stroking her nose and her forehead and her little fingers, and thinking, "Oh, wow. Somebody is depending on me," not just for food and shelter, but depending on me to be a solid individual, having a sense of who I am, being grounded and centered. I didn't have the language then. I have it now. I just remember thinking, "It's time to make some shifts."

My path was the Church. I didn't grow up in the Church. We went at Christmas and Easter, but we weren't consistent churchgoers. I would say my first real encounter with meditation came in the form of what Christians called prayer. I remember taking it home with me and sitting in solitude and silence. While the Church teaches you to talk a lot, make requests and pray for people, my prayer life didn't always look like that. I made it my own. It was an internal journey: Why am I doing the things I do? Why do I think that way? Why am I having those thoughts about myself? It was really about being with myself from a place of curiosity, a place of wonder, and a place of shifting, adjusting and guiding my life in the direction I wanted, and that was empowering for me. I would say that's how it started, and I was very consistent throughout my 20s and 30s.

Since then, in my 40s, I've had a deconstruction of faith and it's morphed and evolved and changed into what it is now, although it's really not that different from what I was doing in my early 20s when I started. It's a way to ground and center myself. It's always been a way for me to journey back home to the truest most authentic me. Back then, it was about connecting myself with the higher being. Now it's about, "I am one with all that is." It helps to center and guide and ground me in every present moment, whatever that looks like.

I make a point to meditate every morning. Then, throughout the day if something crazy happens, or something unexpected, and I feel anxious, I have a resource: I can pause and do breath work, or I can close my eyes and focus on my breath. It's not about focusing on other things, other people, or a higher being. It's about focusing on my breath, and how that centers me. It has become a daily practice for me.

Q: I love that you've put it all into an App. There are a dozen and one resources that already exist, but I love the focus of EXHALE. Would you share some responses you've received from the people using it, and the direction you'd like to see it go?

One lady said, "This App has changed my life." She was sexually assaulted earlier this year and was really traumatized, and with the pandemic as well she was super anxious. She said, "I cannot tell you how much I needed this, but I didn't know I needed it." I've heard that more than anything else. She said, "I look forward to the notifications. I feel like you made it just for me!" I am so glad she feels that way, because that was my intent. She passed it along to her therapist who loves it and has now shared it with a hundred of her clients.

We keep getting messages like, "I had all of this stuff going on, and I didn't know that I could manage it through breath work and meditation." With the meditation, I talk about the parasympathetic nervous system, so one response is, "I really love the science behind this. I love knowing that something is actually impacting my body in a positive way."

Every time I hear something like that it's a breath of fresh air, because my intent was to truly help people. We want to do Version 2, where we build a community for Women of Color to engage with each other, not just with the resources in the App. There's so much value in community.

I started my own tech company called Katecha, which I'm really excited about. I'd love to launch an App for Black and Brown children and students. To build community for them is also important. I'm really excited to see what 2021 has to offer.

Now it's about, "I am one with all that is." It helps to center and guide and ground me in every present moment, whatever that looks like.

Q: The practices that you've been implementing, for yourself and for others, are a great way to remember that life is always going to throw us challenges, so we can't expect, no matter how much we plan. If we're grounded in ourselves and in our breath, if we're grounded in the energy that is our birthright – our mind, body, and soul – then we have everything we need within us. Amidst all the chaos in the world, the simplicity that you just described is a beautiful concept – to know that we are truly given everything that we need in order to feel safe within ourselves.

Absolutely. It's a journey home to ourselves. Because the world and the way we're conditioned pulls us out of our bodies, so we become disembodied, disconnecting from our soul, disconnecting from our emotions, disconnecting from our physical bodies. Black women, in particular, have been conditioned to pull away from ourselves, and these resources are our journey back home – being in our bodies, being with our emotions, being with ourselves, trusting ourselves. I've been on this journey for many, many years, and I feel more at home than I've ever felt in my life. It's my hope that EXHALE is a resource for that journey. As long as we are centered here, we're good. It's about journeying back home, for sure.



Q: That is the fundamental concept of the Heartfulness practices – finding our way back to the naturalness that is us. That is one of the goals of meditating on the heart. It's always so beautiful to connect with other people who have the same ideals. It's a lovely reminder that we think we are so different and yet we are so similar.

That is absolutely true.

Q: Katara, I'm so glad you could speak freely about everything you've been going through, and the ways you want to keep going. Thank you

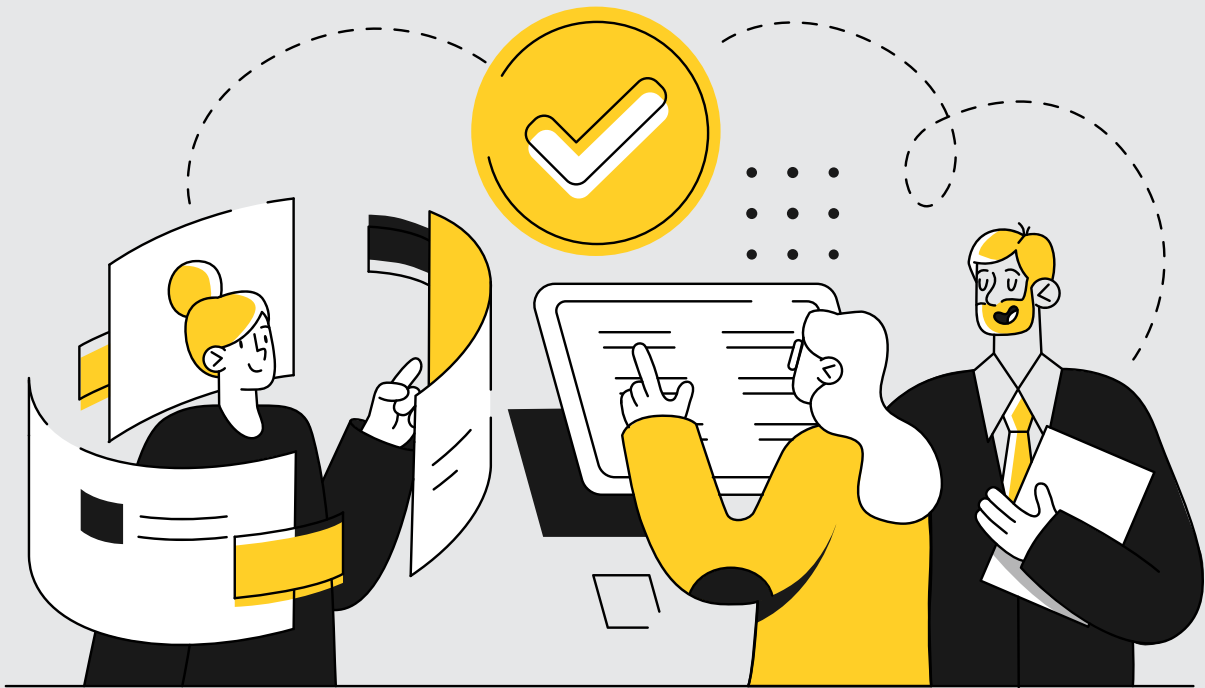
for educating me today and helping me see how much we have in common. I want to use that commonality to keep going forward. Thank you.

Thank you. That is great.

BESPOKE SOLUTIONS FOR SIGNATURE SPACES MetalWorks R-H 200 CEILING SYSTEM & W-H 1100 WALL SYSTEM

Armstrong World Industries (India) Pvt. Ltd. Contact us: 1860 266 7080 | e-mail.: helpdeskindia@armstrongceilings.com | www.armstrongceilings.in





Before you are a leader,
success is all about growing yourself.
When you become a leader,
success is all about growing others.

JACK WELCH



Excellence in Leadership

A HEART-BASED APPROACH

VICTOR KANNAN shares what heart-based leadership means and defines ten essential qualities for excellence in leadership.

*“If you don’t understand that you are in service to the people below you,
then you don’t know anything about leadership.”*

Dee Hawkes – writer, teacher, and football coach.

The other day, out of curiosity, I searched for scholarly articles on “mind-based leadership” and “heart-based leadership.” This yielded more than 3.9 million searches for the former and 3.8 million for the latter. I felt very relieved to see such a return, and I was happy to note that a lot of work has already been done in this area. The search takes us to interesting reading on transactional leadership versus transformational leadership, profit versus purpose, and reward versus emotional investment in team members.

But most modern-day leaders in corporations are held to account for short-term results and stock performance. Cut-throat practices are overtly and covertly encouraged due to competition and short-term orientation. This results in chronic stress for all those who are stuck on the Catherine wheel of corporate life.

While we have higher standards of living today than in the past, our quality of life is still wrought with worrisome consequences. Stress, depression, sleeplessness and loneliness are on the rise. This is causing dissociation from family, friends, faith, and even facts.

Though my search results indicate what people are looking for, it does not give us any indication of the prevailing culture in leadership. Historically, leadership in businesses is for profits and

career promotions. In other words, it is based on quantitative aspects of a person’s corporate experience. For over half a century, however, we have come to realize that material success alone is not adding to our happiness and well-being. Also, society has pockets of material prosperity and better health, while an enormous number of people and the world are unaffected by this prosperity.

This unfortunate trend is not limited to corporate life but has spread to other professions, from school teachers to factory workers. Chronic stress and helplessness create hopelessness and deeper mental issues. They also affect physical health adversely. As body, mind and spirit are connected, if we lose our mental health along with our physical health, where is the question of excellence?

The statistics and trends are alarming, cutting to the very purpose of organizations, people, nations and our civilization. The industrialization, urbanization and materialism that we have adopted over the decades for GDP growth, personal success and the alleviation of disease, have become the essence of our current problems of mental illness and social inequity. The combination of these two is a fertile ground for personal and social unrest. And the lack of an holistic humanistic approach has resulted in the current situation. What are we doing about this?



It is in this context that I am encouraged by the search results. An overwhelming number of people are doing research on heart-based leadership, to help pull us out of the current and imminent danger of losing all the gains we have made as human beings.

Heart-based leadership is a qualitative approach to engendering the lasting well-being of all those with whom we surround ourselves. It is servant leadership. It is interconnected and interdependent.

Corporations that are successful in making a profit, are innovative so that they can adapt and thrive. Those lacking dynamism perish. They either flourish or perish based on how dynamic they are. So, what leadership qualities are needed for such an innovative and dynamic approach?

The leadership of any corporation with a certain corporate culture can be identified by the priorities it has in its value system. The corporate vision, mission, values and goals are not just ritualistic



Source: *Times of India*, March 2015

statements – they are the compass providing direction and stability for the organization over time. The words must be lived through day-to-day actions and periodic reinforcements and corrections. They gradually become ingrained into the DNA of the corporate culture. Such a dynamic organization will continue to evolve to greater heights.

Corporate culture is always top-down. It succeeds according to the authenticity of its leaders' behavior and the transparent corrective action when the top falters.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

Peter Drucker, author

The order of many older organizations is hierarchical, top-heavy, and structural. The expectation of contribution from employees is limited to doing their jobs and making their bosses happy. The emphasis on "out of the box" thinking is not encouraged. As a result, the speed of innovation and competitiveness is also less. As a result, many older organizations are not as great as they used to be.

In comparison, a heart-based organization is flat, productive, inclusive, innovative, and provides a porous ceiling for talents to move up in the organization quite easily.

What is heart-based leadership?

Stephanie McDilda, a motivational speaker and leadership coach, says, “Heart-based leadership is the ability of an individual to inspire loyalty and build powerful relationships by being kind, caring, and courageous – virtually by leading from the heart.”

She goes on to say, “I’ve asked thousands of people to tell me about the best manager for whom they have ever worked. They say things like:

She cared about me,
He listened well,
She was concerned about my development, and
He appreciated me.

“These are all heart-based traits that connect you with your team at the heart. Virtually no one has ever said:

She was strategic, or
He was good with numbers.

“These are head-based traits. I cannot deny that these are important skills for a good manager, but they are not the qualities that inspire passion in your team. Remember that your goal is to manage resources, but lead people.”

It will not be out of place to mention the concept of servant leadership in this context. As Aristotle said, “He who cannot be a good follower, cannot be a good leader.” In a nutshell, this talks about leading by example. When Jesus said “Love thy neighbor as thyself,” it is leading by example. In a

leader today we value the virtues of authenticity and empathy more than being an extrovert.

“When you love your employees, they will love you back ... and they will walk on hot coals to give you what you need,” says Stephanie.

Changing the panorama of leadership

Today’s leaders are more diverse, technically savvy, rationally minded, and independent. A recent survey by the MIT Sloan School of Management shows that younger managers prefer narrower, more technical approaches, while older ones tend to work through others and focus on the big picture. One way to interpret these results is to say that the mental frame of reference is uniquely different between the two age groups. The younger group has the potential to use the heart-based leadership values while the older group is more set in their ways. This is a generalization and not indicative of individuals or particular corporations.

It is gratifying to note that “Managing yourself” is the predominant characteristic of both younger and older leaders, followed by “Anticipating people’s emotional reactions during a change process.” Both these management techniques point to the need to improve the *emotional intelligence* of leaders.

Emotional intelligence “is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, and adjust emotions to adapt to environments.”² Dr. Daniel Goleman popularized this term in 1995 via his best-selling book, *Emotional Intelligence*, where he lists an array of heart-based qualities such as

ASHTANGA YOGA



attention, empathy, authenticity, and resilience that drive leadership performance.

In Yoga, many practices are prescribed to improve mental acumen and purity of the heart. Both go hand in hand, along with a certain amount of physical agility and well-being. The eight steps of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga provide a roadmap for us to cultivate heart-based qualities and lead a balanced life, integrating physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual values and activities. A proper understanding and practice of these eight steps of Yoga results in well-being, which is essential for today's leaders.

The eight steps of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga provide a roadmap for us to cultivate heart-based qualities and lead a balanced life, integrating physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual values and activities.

YAMA

Yama is about good conduct, by removing the habits that prevent it. To my understanding, it consists of practicing:

- Non-violence, compassion, kindness, love, and empathy,
- Truthfulness, authenticity, vulnerability and resilience,
- Honesty, courage, and responsibility,
- Using all energies and resources appropriately, without indulgence, exploitation or subversion, and with nobility of intention, and
- Not being attached to results and putting in the best effort possible, learning from mistakes to continuously improve.



NIYAMA

Niyama consists of accepting, understanding, and practicing positive values. To my understanding, it consists of practicing:

- Purity of intention, words, deeds, and habits,
- Contentment, and cheerful active acceptance of people, things, ideas, and events as they occur, including those over which we have no control,
- Faith, where we have deeper conviction based on life's experience. Faith gives hope and hope refreshes life constantly,
- Self-awareness and self-knowledge, which are critical for authenticity and sensitivity to others and their needs, and
- Surrender to the highest authority, which is not only the recognition of this immense complex awe-inspiring creation, but also our role in it with due humility, courage and responsibility.

10 essential qualities for a heart-based leader

To be a heart-based leader, we focus on Yama and Niyama.

I consider the above 10 qualities to be essential for a heart-based leader.

While working on the above, we may incorporate breathing and meditation practices to improve our physical and mental health and our awareness. In this way, we will remain dynamic, alert, emotionally intelligent, and able to manage change and lead people. This is the Heartfulness way, a heart-based leadership pathway.

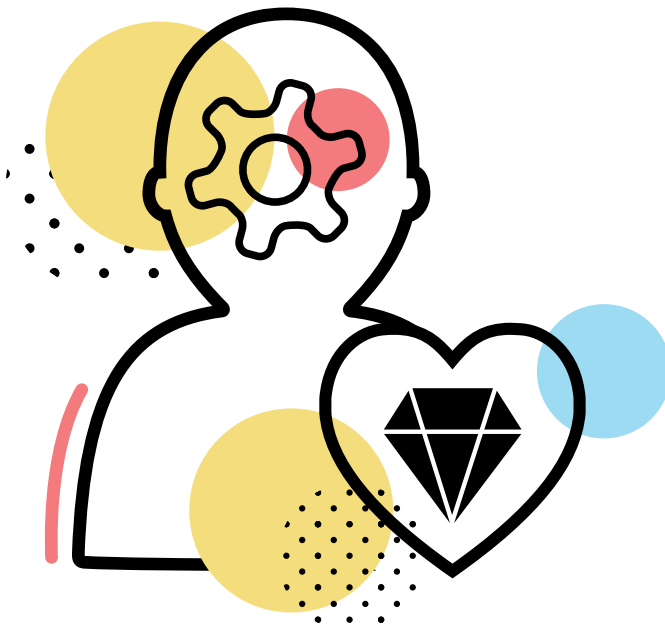
References

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-heart-based-leadership-stephanie-mcdilda/>

² Source: Wikipedia

THE HEARTFUL INNOVATOR

– PART 5



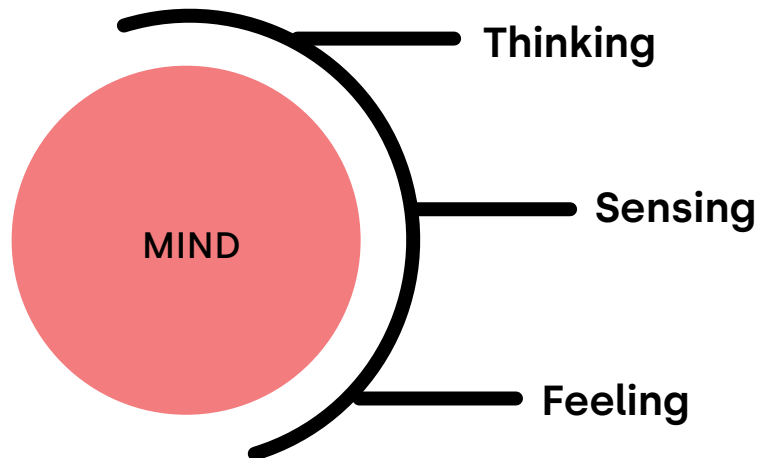
In the previous articles, [RAVI VENKATESAN](#) outlined 4 key aspects of the “inner state” that we want to fine tune to become Heartful Innovators. He explored the role of the intellect, ego and awareness, and their transformation in enabling innovation. Here he explores the role our mind plays in innovation.



always find it interesting that whenever someone talks about their thoughts, they point to their head.



On the other hand, when they talk about their feelings, they point to their heart.



Is a thought really in our head (brain) and a feeling in our heart? No, because thought is not a physical thing. Yes, when we have certain thoughts and feelings, we can see their physical manifestation in brain activity or heart rate, but that is just a manifestation. So where are our thoughts and feelings?

Thoughts form in what we call the mind, which is not the same as the brain. The mind is a non-physical vibrational field, which has two ends of a spectrum – what we commonly call the mind (not the brain) and what we commonly call the heart (not the physical heart). To understand this better, let's take a couple of examples.

As Sally goes to bed, she has an uncomfortable feeling that she forgot to do something. While falling asleep, she wakes up suddenly, remembering that she forgot to lock the main door after guests had left that evening. The feeling has generated a thought.

Jake has an unexpected surprise when his boss tells him he will receive a very nice bonus and appreciates what Jake has done. As he heads

home, the thought of the bonus is no longer in his conscious mind, but he still feels great through the day and carries that feeling with him. In this case, the thought has generated a feeling.

If you observe closely, you will find that when a thought slips from conscious levels to subconscious levels of awareness, it becomes a feeling. And when a feeling comes up from subconscious levels to conscious levels of awareness it becomes a thought. So, thoughts and feelings live at two ends of a spectrum that we call the mind and heart. Since it is a spectrum, there is no such thing as a pure thought or a pure feeling. A thought always carries the shadow of a feeling and vice versa.

There is a level in between, which we might call sensing. The easiest way to understand this is when we are looking at a problem and thinking about various solutions. If we step back, we often “sense” the right solution. We can even practice this as a creative problem-solving technique. It is interesting that the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines sensing as “to have a vague awareness of” and also “to have a clear idea of.”



Thoughts and feelings live at two ends of a spectrum that we call the mind and heart. Since it is a spectrum, there is no such thing as a pure thought or a pure feeling. A thought always carries the shadow of a feeling and vice versa.

For an innovator, this ability to step back, “sense” and eventually “feel” or intuit solutions to problems is one of the most useful abilities. So why utilize the “feeling” side? Consider this: According to Dr. Bruce Lipton in *The Biology of Belief*, the subconscious mind can process 20,000,000 bits of information per second, whereas the conscious mind can only process 40 bits of information per second. So, the subconscious mind can process 500,000 times more than the conscious mind.

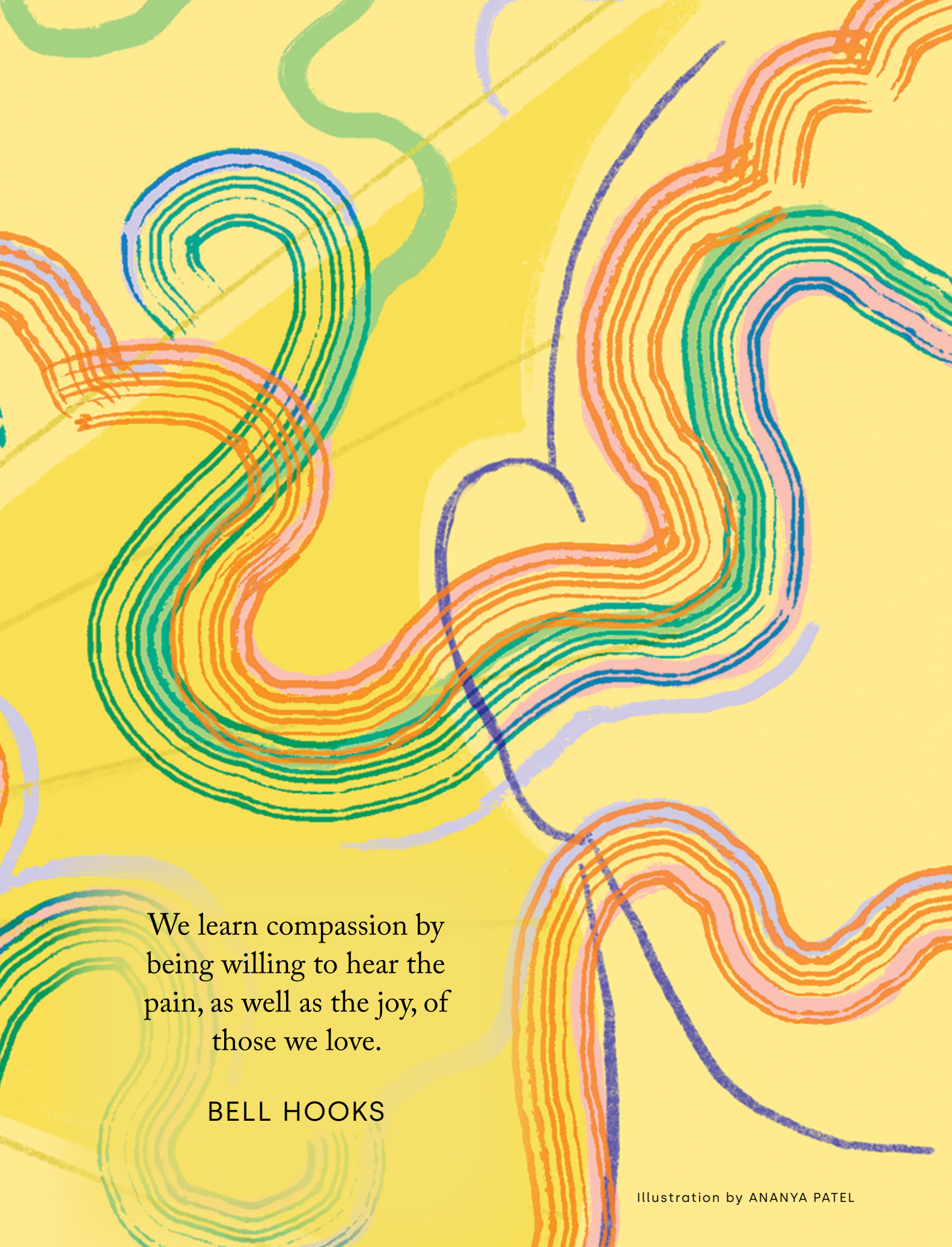
Here are a few simple exercises to develop the sensing and feeling side of the heart-mind spectrum:

1. Do 20 minutes of meditation every day. Heartfulness Meditation is a great practice to rapidly expand our awareness from the thinking to the feeling level.
2. Practice pausing during meetings or conversations, and pay attention to your feelings. Try to “sense” what is going on versus thinking it through all the time.
3. Develop the habit of paying attention to signals from your body, which can often take you away from the world of thoughts to the world of sensing and later feeling. For example, when you are about to have a conversation with a colleague and feel a knot in your stomach, explore that feeling a little more to see if there is a signal to heed.

In the next few articles, we will explore more practices that help make the shift to becoming a Heartful Innovator.

inner view



The background of the entire page is a vibrant yellow. Overlaid on this are several thick, wavy, hand-drawn lines in various colors including green, blue, orange, pink, and purple. These lines flow across the page in a non-representational, organic manner, creating a sense of movement and energy. Some lines are straighter, while others form loops or curves.

We learn compassion by
being willing to hear the
pain, as well as the joy, of
those we love.

BELL HOOKS

Illustration by ANANYA PATEL

Women & Spirituality

MIRABAI BUSH is the author of *Working With Mindfulness*, co-creator of Google's "Search Inside Yourself" program, co-founder of the Center for Contemplative Mind and Society and a founding board member of the Seva Foundation. She teaches contemplative practices, and has facilitated retreats, workshops and courses on spirit and action for over 20 years. To commemorate International Women's Day, Mirabai spoke with **PURNIMA RAMAKRISHNAN** on March 6, 2021.

Q: Thank you for joining us today, Mirabai. It is an honor, a privilege, and a great blessing to have you with us.

Thank you, Purnima. I love talking with you, so this is a joy for me, too. And you chose a really wonderful subject that makes us all think and rethink about our assumptions.

Q: So what are the unique challenges and opportunities for a woman on a spiritual path?

I will probably speak as if I am speaking to all women. I realize that's how I was thinking about these questions, and so for those men who are listening in, just

imagine that you are privileged to be in this room with an extraordinary group of women. I am imagining the big circle of us who can't see each other, but we know we are here.

Unique challenges and opportunities for a woman on the spiritual path? There's so much, and there are layers of challenges. Of course, it's different in different cultures, but it is probably global that women experience a certain amount of negative bias in different ways.

There are differences between men and women physically, mentally and psychologically, but the spirit within us is one. How we wake up

to that is, however, conditioned by our cultures. The first time I was in India, from 1970 to 1972, I remember a pretty strong belief that women couldn't be enlightened. I was actually not looking for enlightenment in the sense of trying to be a saint, but I was looking toward waking up to the potential of who I could be as a human being.

I think part of my experience was because I learnt these practices inside monastic settings, and they were all men. All the teachers were men, and they didn't have a lot of experience with women waking up spiritually. We didn't challenge it in an activist way, but it's obvious to us that of course we can wake



up, of course we can know more deeply who we fully are.

It's there in many ways in different cultures, and I do believe that globally we are working out of it. There is still a lot to be done, and we have to do it with love and kindness and compassion for the whole so that it happens.

Even in situations where men and women are sharing more of the family responsibilities, women often have more time-consuming responsibilities, and that can keep us from creating a dedicated space for ourselves to do whatever practices we follow. That really can be a challenge. My experience is that women often have a stronger, bigger capacity for integrating body, mind and spirit, including the emotions, thoughts and responsibilities. Women tend to have more integrated intelligence. It's not to say that it doesn't exist in men, or they can't cultivate it, but I do think it comes more easily to us. I feel that we have been given that so that we can integrate all our roles.

We also often have multiple identities – as wife, mother, another person at work, something different with friends, grandmother or granddaughter. There are so many identities we have, including whatever arts we are involved in. The advantage is that we are much less likely to get fixed on a single identity.

We all work on our identity; recognizing, earning, celebrating a particular identity, how we can trace it genetically. It's been really important in this country, where we struggle a lot with racism. The most popular book on racism here right now is *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson. Work on identity has been important for women.

We need to cultivate the ability to hold essentially two conflicting ideas in the mind at the same time: We are a certain age, gender, race, and all of that; and while we are all of those, yet we are not. We are more than that. They are not limiting. They are identifying, but they are not all we are. Because we are often moving in and out of our identities, it's easier for us to recognize that there is a constant that is not any of them, our life's spirit that is the loving awareness of who we are. The important thing is to find our way to return home to the center of our being, to define our practice.

Heartfulness is such a great practice, but remember to return to the love at the center of it all so that you are not getting caught in all the different ways, because as women we have lots of challenges.

Spend time with other women with whom you have a resonance, who might not be doing the same practice or whose understanding may be somewhat different. It's so important because in these

conversations you allow whatever is there just beneath awareness to surface. That kind of support allows you to open up to things you may not be able to see otherwise. It's been one of the most important spiritual practices in my life.

I have had a group of women (and men) who started the Seva Foundation, which is an International Public Health Organization. We started it after discovering our spirituality in India and Nepal, because we wanted to give back to those cultures, the countries and the people, not just to the teachers we honored, because we were allowed to live there for a couple of years and integrate what we were learning. When we returned to the West, we integrated it into a larger lifestyle. There were about ten of us women who were on the Board together for 20 years, and then we went off the Board to make space for younger people. We missed each other, so we started having a retreat once a year where we shared what was going on in our lives, what was important to us, how we were growing, what we were struggling with, and what our teachers also go through.

That's been going on for probably 20 years now, and it's so important. We don't do anything special, we just share with each other. I have other women friends, too, but that group has really helped me grow



Spend time with other women with whom you have a resonance, who might not be doing the same practice or whose understanding may be somewhat different. It's so important because in these conversations you allow whatever is there just beneath awareness to surface. That kind of support allows you to open up to things you may not be able to see otherwise. It's been one of the most important spiritual practices in my life.

over time. So I encourage you. A number of these women were in India and Bangladesh, they worked and campaigned to end smallpox. The Seva Foundation came out of it. They were either epidemiologists or married to them. It was the first infectious disease to be eliminated from the planet. We have had really good conversations about public health, and also about spiritual aspects, how we grow when we are confronted with something so frightening.

Q: You spoke about how women have different identities, and they find wonderful, intelligent ways to integrate them and balance their roles. So how do we prioritize and balance the various roles we have through life? For example, today I told you that I was delayed for this recording because I was stuck in the kitchen, and you were so accommodating of that. It is a woman who understands me and who is supporting me in my domestic role. How do we do it?

That's a great question. First of all, you didn't say that you were stuck in the kitchen, you said, "I am preparing a meal for my family." But now you say that you were stuck in the kitchen, and I love that. We all have that, and it changes through life. We are always balancing.

Really it comes
back to deep
listening and
staying in your
heart in the center,
because there are
not only changes at
different stages of
life, but also
moment to
moment.

My first Buddhist teacher had the same answer for everything. He was Goenka, this Burmese teacher. He had a practice of taking your awareness through different parts of your body – not trying to relax as we do in *savasana*, but just noticing what is happening, and he called it "sweeping." For everything we'd ask him, and we asked really complicated questions, he would say "Keep on sweeping."

So, really it comes back to deep listening and staying in your heart in the center, because there are not only changes at different stages of life, but also moment to moment. I ran a business when I first came back from India called Illuminations, and we built it on the principles of right livelihood. I wanted to see how being in the workplace every day could really be Karma Yoga, how it could bring the Gita to life in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I learnt so much from that, because I believed before I started, and certainly through the years of working, that everything we do can be practiced if we have the right intention.

I remember one time I was asked to write about what I had learnt from running a business of "right livelihood," and one of the things was, "Get confused about whether to attend a meeting at the bank or your child's birthday party." The editors kept trying to change it to, "Don't get confused." "No," I said. "Get confused!" Ask yourself



this: In this moment, what is more important? Sometimes you have conflicting sets of values, but you have to go as deep as you can and ask yourself, “Is it more important to do my podcast or cook a good dinner?” Usually we don’t have to do one or the other. It usually happens like it did to us now, it moves around. But it does require really listening.

I have one child, and when he was growing up there was always this

juggling with work, parenting, being a wife, and other things. Later, when he went off to college, I remember this incredible sense of spaciousness. It was like, “Oh my God! Wow! What do I do with this?” Then it was sorting out what matters, how much time to spend on my practice, and how much time to spend on my livelihood, friendships, and other things.

You know the answers at the spiritual level. You know what

matters to you. You may not know the implications of what’s going to happen in the future, depending on those decisions, but you want to make those decisions from the deepest place that you can. You keep asking. You are not a single being. There is a core. I mean you are changing every moment. When I retired from being the Director of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, I was 70. I asked myself, “What am I being asked to do at this time in my life?”

Real confidence, the way you trust yourself to be in any situation, knowing that you might make mistakes, doesn't mean that you always perform perfectly. It is a kind of radical self-confidence in which you trust yourself to do the best you can.

I didn't want to do the day-to-day managing, running, any longer. I loved doing it, but it felt like time for something different. In India I learnt about ashrams. I think it is the sanest description of how you should spend your last stage of life, really attending to your spiritual self. Of course, you do it throughout life, but at that time you do it in a slightly different way because you are preparing for the transition.

Q: I am really blown away by how simple you make it seem. So, how do we find the balance between exuding confidence and reaching contentment? Confidence speaks about so many things: If a person sees you as a very confident person your clout increases. As a woman, there is all the more need to have clout quotient to get your work done, to move forward in life. So how does it work? Do we go back to being our original self or do we have to acquire this through a performance?

It's a really good question for women. Have you experienced that in your life? Have you been in situations where you needed to project confidence in order to be effective, to get things done?

Q: A lot of women have this question.

It goes to the core of the whole theme. Real confidence, the way

you trust yourself to be in any situation, knowing that you might make mistakes, doesn't mean that you always perform perfectly. It is a kind of radical self-confidence in which you trust yourself to do the best you can. And part of that might be acting in a way that people recognize you, respect you for the role you are playing at that time.

I first learnt to meditate after graduate school, working for my Ph.D., which is always a struggle. I never felt like I read enough books, or was smart enough, or thought enough. When I first began to practice deeply, I felt a kind of joy because I really knew something, and I was not faking it in any way. I wasn't inadequate. I had found the place in myself that is always adequate. It's who I am. I also realized that I could know it fully. After that, I felt more at home on the planet. I felt like I belonged, I felt like I knew who I was, even though we keep changing. I had this capacity for being present with whatever was happening, and that gave me a confidence that allowed me to take a lot of risks. I could enter into situations for which I wasn't really prepared, and I learnt a lot. So, in as much as you can get in touch with that, you don't have to project anything. You can be honest and humble and powerful at the same time, because other people will trust you.



When I first began to practice deeply, I felt a kind of joy because I really knew something, and I was not faking it in any way. I wasn't inadequate. I had found the place in myself that is always adequate. It's who I am. I also realized that I could know it fully. After that, I felt more at home on the planet.

I remember when we first started the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, our goal was to introduce spiritual practices into mainstream secular organizations. Nobody was doing that in this country then. It started in 1995 and we would work with groups of lawyers, scientists and educators. In the beginning we said, "We don't really have any idea how to do this. No one has done it, so we don't know what's going to happen and we may have to change things as we go along." We were a little too open. There were people who were so used to learning things from the authorities, and they were like "I don't know if I want to be a part of this!" Then we had to start telling them, "We really do know about this, even though there may be some adjustments we have to make as we go along." So, you may find yourself in certain circumstances where you need to learn to be an authority, but that doesn't mean you don't have the confidence to learn what needs to be learnt.

Contentment comes from knowing that we are doing what we are supposed to be doing in any moment of our life. It's accepting what's here in the moment. It's the basic principle of practice. You see honestly what's there, who you are, what the environment and circumstances are, and then you give up any attachment to the fruits. For example, you may

Contentment
comes from
knowing that we
are doing what we
are supposed to be
doing in any
moment of our life.
It's accepting
what's here in the
moment. It's the
basic principle of
practice.

be working toward a goal, but if it comes out differently you can be there with that and move from there. So, don't be attached to outcomes, see what's there, and do it wholeheartedly as best you can in the moment. This is what you have been given, and you are here for it. I think it's where contentment really comes from. You are not wanting anything, even if you are working toward the goal. You are not wanting, you are not rejecting, you are just here in this moment doing what needs to be done. Then you feel really good.

Q: There were two beautiful things you said: Not being attached to the fruits or the results of the process, and that it's possible to be humble and powerful and joyful at the same time. I am going to keep those with me all the time.

Good! I think you do keep them with you all the time.

Q: Do you think women are more emotional and sensitive? If so, how does this effect their spiritual progress? On one side, it can aid the spiritual journey and on the other side it can also create stumbling blocks.

Well, it seems to be true that women are more intuitive, sensitive and emotional. Of course, some men are very aware and some women are not. The important



Love is at the heart of it. When we let go of destructive emotions, there is space for love to flourish. That will take care of life's problems.

thing is to be aware of emotions as they arise. They arise as sensations in our body and thoughts in our minds. I would say that whatever is arising in the moment comes from past karma. How we react in the moment is our decision, so the most important thing about emotions is to be able to see them as they arise and act in a non-harming way. This is especially true of the destructive emotions like anger, hatred and rage.

I have thought a lot about compassion, self-compassion and empathy – the ability to feel the emotional state of another person, whether it's their joy, delight, happiness, or suffering. With compassion, unlike empathy alone, comes the desire to relieve the suffering that you see in another person. It's essential to the future of humanity. So honor that capacity for feeling the suffering of others and then cultivate it, which you can do through the practices of Heartfulness. Cultivating the capacity to respond by relieving suffering is some of our most important work to do. If we find that we are sensitive and emotional, we are cultivating the awareness to see it, hold it, and then use it in a way that is helpful for ourselves and others. Finally, love is at the heart of it. When we let go of destructive emotions, there is space for love to flourish. That will take care of life's problems.

Q: That is so beautiful. So, how can women be more responsible for shaping a more spiritual humanity?

When I asked my teacher that question, he asked a rhetorical question: "What should I do with my life and what should we do with our lives, in order to make the world a better place?" His answer was, "Love everyone, serve everyone, and always tell the truth." At first I thought that was a simple direction – love everyone, serve everyone – but of course I have spent the last fifty years trying it out, seeing what he meant.

At different stages in my life it has meant different things. The world can be very complex, and our responses to all these issues and questions can also be complex. But I do believe, when it comes down to it, it is about loving everyone. All it means is to wake up so that we can love, recognizing how we are all interconnected.

Once we realize that, we know that just as we don't want to suffer, others also don't want to suffer. No one wants to suffer. What can we do to help each other wake up and be happier? Serve without attachment, because we know that we are all part of a huge consciousness, a loving awareness. That will keep us busy, and will always keep us open to learning more.



There are different things to learn at different stages. If we just think of staying open to what we can learn in this moment, keeping our hearts open, so that we learn it in a loving compassionate way, then we are good. It's a life's work.

Throughout this life, I have been amazed that we go through a model of education where we learn certain things, then we know, and then we act. That is true about certain technical skills, but our learning goes on and on and on. And there are different things to learn at different stages. If we just think of staying open to what we can learn in this moment, keeping our hearts open, so that we learn it in a loving compassionate way, then we are good. It's a life's work.

Q: Yes! It's a lifetime of doing, and I will try to do it. Finally, can we speak a little about transcending the idea of spiritual well-being toward spiritual flourishing?

My answers are the same. Find a way to take joy in this journey. It seems it's really difficult, and we are working toward practicing, but actually that is all in the relative plane. We can also remember that we are part of a great loving heart and take joy from that. We can feel grateful for simply being here in this precious human birth. I am now looking out the window, here in the winter, and all the leaves are falling from the trees. I can see really fine tiny branches falling off a great giant tree. I sit here at this desk hours at a time, and often don't look up and say, "Wow, that is really beautiful" and feel that kind of joy, appreciation and gratitude.

Do you know who Anand Mai Ma was? She was a saint in northern India who was alive when I was there, and she was an extraordinarily loving person. I just want to show you these two pictures of her on my desk. Looking at her face is such a joy. And here's one from when she was younger. When I ask myself questions about being a woman and flourishing, I sometimes look at these pictures of her. This happened to me with my Guru also. It wasn't that the questions were answered. It was that the questions fell away. They weren't relevant anymore in the presence of the big answer – presence and love.

Q: Throughout this conversation you have spoken about love, joy and gratitude. I am just so happy to be in your presence, and I am sure all the participants are too. Thank you so much.

I have loved being with you. It's wonderful. Thank you.

Q: Do you have any closing thoughts?

Well, I know it is night for you now, so go to sleep with joy in your heart. May you and everyone there flourish in your love and care for others.

To watch the webinar: https://youtu.be/aC_OvQtzSl4

Illustrations by ANANYA PATEL

THE MEMORIES WE MAKE WITH OUR FAMILY ARE EVERYTHING.



HAPPY INTERNATIONAL FAMILY DAY

Make stronger memories with
tools designed to harness
your cognitive potential and
create a positive impact on
your family.

RESTART 
REWIRE FOR YOUR SECOND INNINGS

TO KNOW MORE LOG ONTO WWW.RESTART.BRIGHTERMINDS.ORG

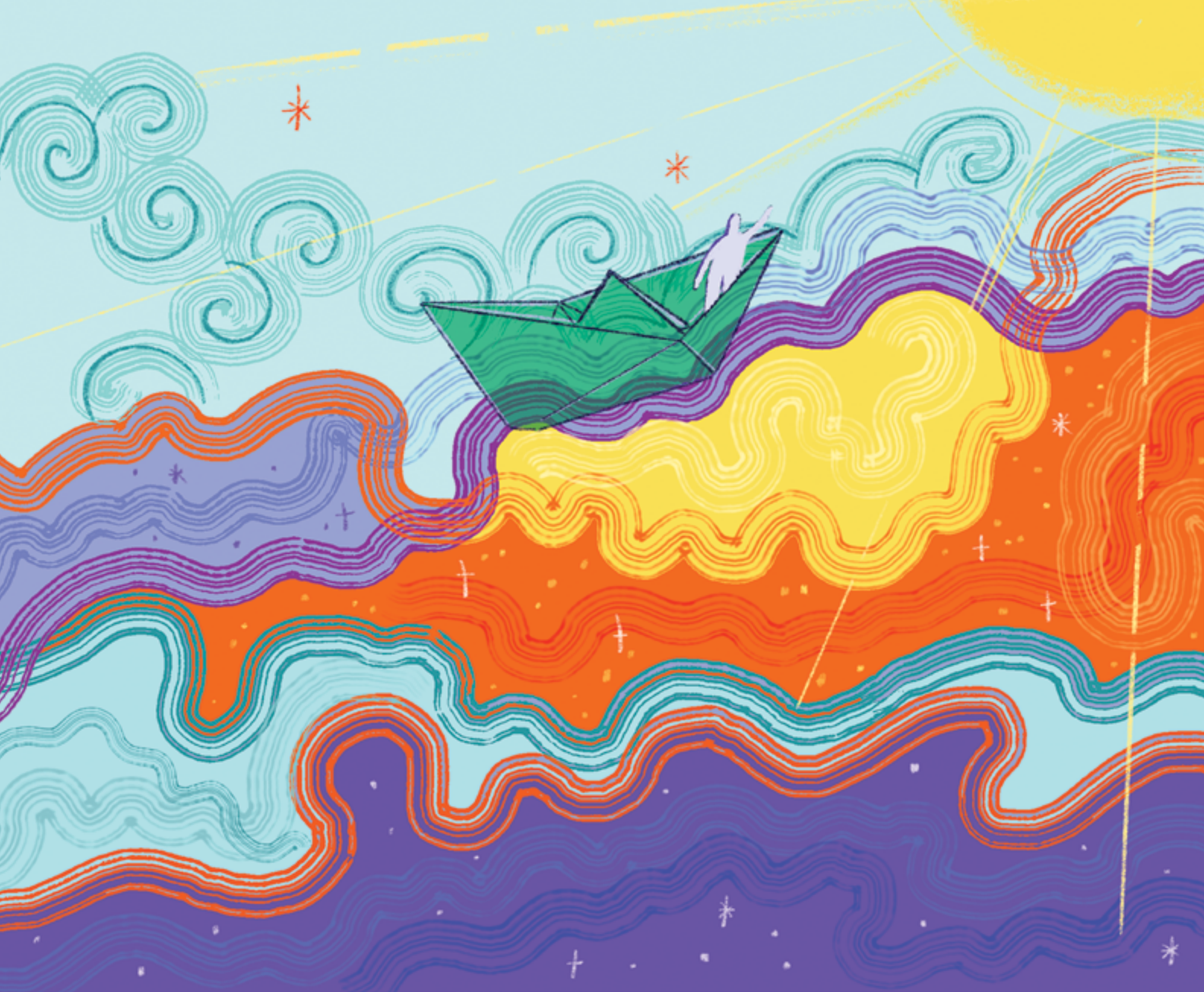




It Changes Everything

We need silence
to be able to touch
souls.

MOTHER TERESA



UNITY IN A WORLD OF DIVERSITY

BRIAN JONES explores unity in a world full of challenges and diversity. Through different analogies and his own personal experience with meditation, he finds effective ways to achieve unity through the silence of the heart.

It was a long flight from Los Angeles to Singapore. Somewhere over the Pacific Ocean I took another one of many walks from my seat to the back of the plane for a much-needed cup of coffee.

Three women stood there, all from different countries, each one holding a small baby. A lovely and nonsensical conversation was going on; each mother amusing the other's baby with an assortment of gaga and coo-cooing baby sounds. It was apparent that none of the mothers spoke the languages of the others, and yet three babies were having quite a fun time, innocently laughing, not caring what language or which mother was entertaining them!

I was gleefully immersed in this special moment. I found the innocence, love and happiness that so effortlessly flowed a wonderful example of how we are all inextricably united. We come into this world with such purity, with a heart wide open, but quickly we begin to realize, "These are my hands, this is my foot, these are my toes." Soon enough, I, me, and mine are here to stay.

"Unity" has many levels of meaning. We are united by love as well as by hate, we are united by country, by race, by culture, and even by the football team we support. But in these cases, our experience of unity is limited, accompanied by a feeling of exclusiveness – my team is better than yours, my political party is better than yours, my religion is better than yours, etc.

If we look back through time, there has hardly been a moment when there wasn't a war, an uprising, or a tribal dispute. We may wonder: Is it possible that we live on a planet that is only united by divisiveness? Imagine, we've all come into this world with such purity, acceptance, and non-judgment. What happened?

By nature's design, we are soul, spirit, essence, or *something* that manifests in an infinitude of ways through this complex, wondrous and beautiful vehicle of a body. But isn't that the dilemma? We perceive everyone as different and forget that our soul, our essence, our HEART is the same. Our outer perception hides the truth within.

Though the world faces many challenges, occasionally we see glimpses of that "united heart." We witness how hardship and tragedy bring us together. In difficult times we forget our differences, our hearts open and we extend a hand of help and friendship. Through hardship we are reminded that we all laugh the same and we cry the same, too. When we witness deep emotion in another person it stirs our hearts. We exclaim, "Oh! My heart really goes out to that person." We feel them. What they are going through. We've been there ourselves. We resonate with them. In such moments, it's the tenderness of the human heart, that feels our sameness.

By nature's design, we are soul, spirit, essence, or something that manifests in an infinitude of ways through this complex, wondrous and beautiful vehicle of a body.



Soft notes, intense rhythms, solos, mood changes, key changes, each musician having their chance to shine, spontaneously playing the music of their soul. It is like sitting on the very edge of creation as it emerges, pure, alive, with a wonderful adherence to unspoken principles.

Having been a musician for most of my life, I've experienced another type of unity when playing music with others. There have been a few rare occasions when I entered a room of musicians, plugged in my guitar, and with barely an introduction began playing with four or five other musicians who themselves had never played together.

Sometimes genuine magic happens – the playing spontaneously begins and for the next forty minutes the most authentic and extremely sophisticated music simply flows. Soft notes, intense rhythms, solos, mood changes, key changes, each musician having their chance to shine, spontaneously playing the music of their soul. It is like sitting on the very edge of creation as it emerges, pure, alive, with a wonderful adherence to unspoken principles.

Then, as the music winds down and reaches its natural finale, everyone is left speechless, perhaps with an incredulous smile, feeling, "Wow, what just happened?" In moments like this we bypass the mind, and the silent feelings of the heart flow out through our fingertips, genuine, unprocessed.

We are like the spokes of a bicycle wheel, each of us connected at the hub or center of the wheel. The spoke is the timeline of our existence, all of us coming from the same "center." The farther we "spokes" have moved away from that center, the farther apart we've become from each other. Our sense of separateness has increased more and more.

This is apparent in daily life; we continually face diversity juggling work, family and friends. We engage in many relationships, we agree, we disagree, we try to please each other and ourselves, too. We spokes interact, we're separate units, but we tend to forget we are all still connected at the center. We just don't remember how to connect there.

Of course, we do create times of unity in our lives, sharing a movie or a hobby, taking a vacation and sharing a vocation. Sharing the same goal brings unity. How many times, when we are collaborating on a team project, do we hear the phrase, "We need to be on the same page"? It's a reminder that when we understand our objective, our goal, we will connect with our shared goal and work efficiently to achieve it.

All of this is our external work. What about our internal work? Realizing unity within my own self, in a very tangible way, requires personal inner work. In this process we soon realize our inner goal is not merely about being on the same page, as that would be a very short story indeed!

Each of us is a chapter in the same book creating our unique storyline, sometimes lighthearted and other times sad or tragic, but all the while being bound by the same cover, a beautiful story in the book of "Life."

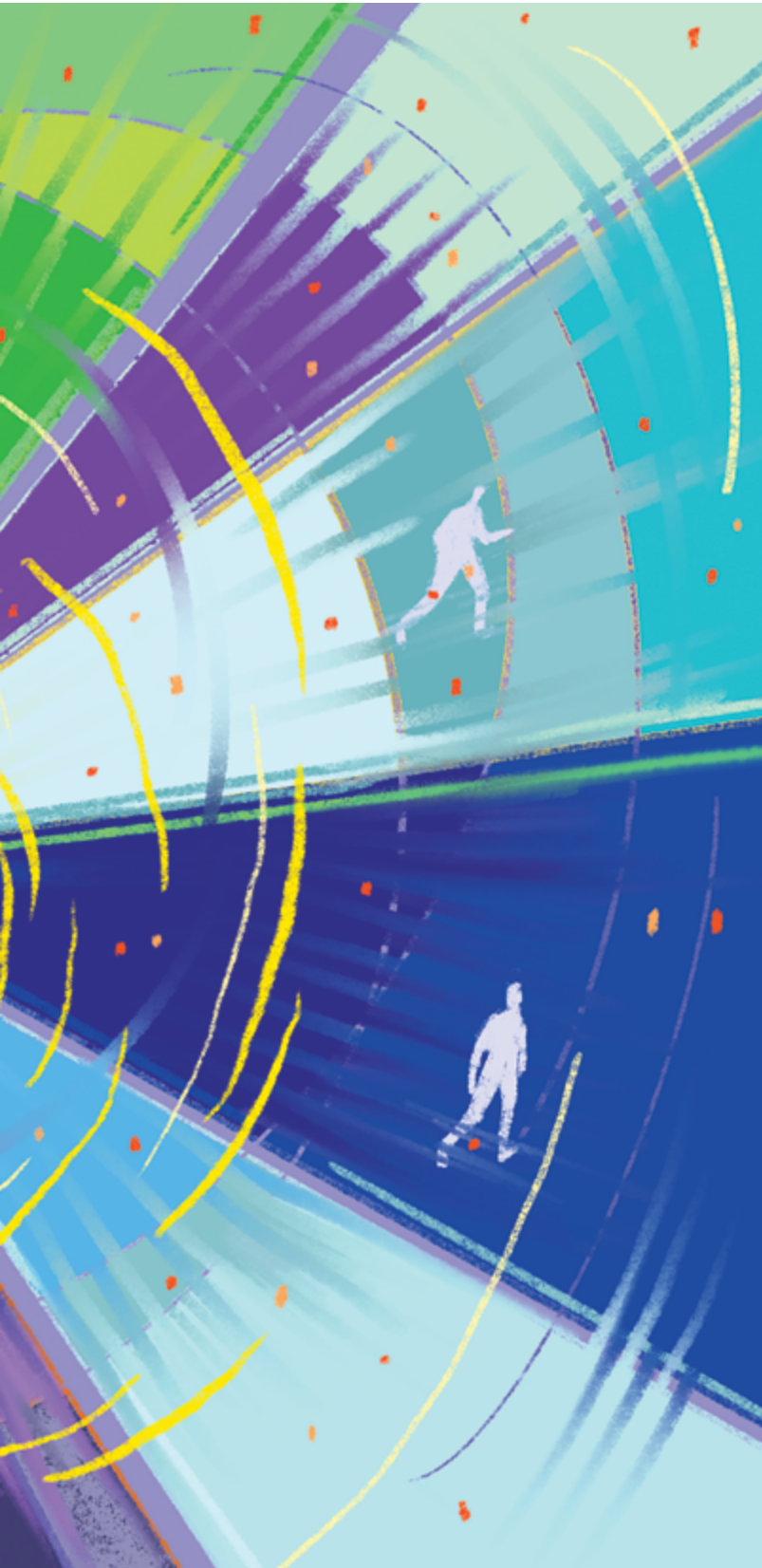
We are many threads of many colors, woven through the fabric of time and space to complete the cosmic quilt, each essential to the whole.

Nature likely has a larger purpose in creating intelligent, thinking beings, and perhaps a hidden lesson as well, for each of us to learn to see the center and not the spokes.

So how do we connect to our Center?

I believe there is indeed a solution, a way to unite us, to overcome our differences and return to center, a way to point our world in a new direction. "We cannot solve our problems by the same thinking that created them," is a famous saying often attributed to Albert Einstein. If this is indeed the case, can we achieve unity by changing our thinking? Hardly an easy task. Is there another, more effective way to reach unity?





When I was twelve years of age, I was introduced to something that would forever shape my life: meditation. I learned that it is possible to find relief from our incessant thinking and to experience daily deep states, where the mind returns to a simple state of purity. We can call this our original or pure mind. Let's simply call it our center.

When I first experienced a deep meditation, it felt like I was at home in myself for the very first time. Soon my meditation time became the best time, the essential time of my day. It began to permeate, sort of exuding into everything I did. In the depth of meditation, there was an emptiness and yet that emptiness was full of potential! It was fresh, unconditioned.

After a bit of practice, I found it natural and easy to see our sameness more than our differences. It made me pause and take a moment to feel what is behind our actions. In the meditative state, the heart speaks, so there is no room for personal opinion or motive.

I have spent a few decades now meditating with others, both individually and in a group setting. I have witnessed and felt, again and again, how we "spokes" merge into this beautiful Oneness, the unity experienced by all.

I've always loved the Indian tradition of Namaste: I bow to the divine in you. It is a needed reminder to acknowledge that essence, that sameness that makes us one family. In meditation I experience that state of innocence and purity with which we enter this world, and sometimes I feel a sense of wonder – of simply existing!

Perhaps our quest for unity may only come when we connect without words, in the quiet of the heart. We let go, rise above, and share the unity of silence.

Illustrations by ANANYA PATEL

What is Success?

DR. ICHAK ADIZES shares what true success really means and what is needed to find success in everything we do.

My son was visiting me. Sitting next to the pool on my ranch, surrounded by the beautiful valley and the high mountains beyond, he said, “Daddy, you made it.”

I've been thinking about what he said. Did I make it? In many aspects, yes, I did. I have a great family, a happy marriage, great kids who are working and making their living while also contributing to society. I am proud of them. I am financially secure and contributing to society myself through my thoughts and writings. What more could I ask for? I am successful, right?

We can analyze success with the Adizes PAEI code: Have

we achieved physical (P), intellectual (A), emotional (E), and social/spiritual (I) success?

On the intellectual side, I think I have exceeded what would be deemed success, due to my writing contributions as well as my career achievements. On the emotional side, I have put in the work and I believe I am beyond the threshold level. I also believe I have surpassed the threshold on the social/spiritual side. I have great friends and have developed a spiritual orientation through meditation that exceeds the threshold level.

So, if the intellectual side exceeds expectations, and the social, spiritual, and emotional sides are beyond the benchmark, where does that

leave the physical side? Alas, this is the one that I totally neglected! I have gone on a healthy diet from time to time. I have exercised sporadically but I'm overweight and chronically tired due to lack of sleep. Is that success?

Success is a balance of all the subsystems that comprise us. None of them should be neglected at the expense of the other; and yet I did this with my intellectual side, my career side. I sacrificed my health. Am I happy with this? Absolutely not. Come to think of it, the price was too high and not at all worth it.

We don't know the value of the most important things in our lives until we are deficient

Success is a balance of all the subsystems that comprise us. None of them should be neglected at the expense of the other.

in them – until we miss them. We don't know the value of life until we are dying, or the value of health until we are sick. We don't realize the value of love until we are lonely.

I have neglected the most important factor, I believe, which is the platform, the foundation for the other subsystems – my physical health.

If one is not successful in physical health, eventually the intellectual side will suffer, as will the emotional side, and in turn, the social side. PAEI is a pyramid. At the bottom are the physical needs of food, shelter, and health. Next is the intellectual side, which



also encompasses materialism (the feeling that we are secure and financially safe). Resting on these is the emotional side, which includes the most exciting parts of life. And still higher, at the top, is the negating of oneself, the taking of oneself out of the equation, seeing oneself as part of the totality of humanity and thus as a part of something bigger than oneself. The need is not only for self-actualization, but

for a sense of being part of something bigger than oneself. This is the "I".

If the foundation is weak, everything above it in this pyramid will be shaky. Start with physical health. Eat right, sleep right, exercise right. Only then will you find success with everything else.

Just thinking and feeling,
Dr. Ichak Kalderon Adizes

<https://www.ichakadizes.com/post/what-is-success>





Moderation

The art of removing
and creating habits

PART 5

DAAJI continues his series on refining habits, in the light of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and current scientific and yogic principles and practices. Last month, he shone some light on the habit of stealing, asteya, exploring the spectrum of theft and lack versus generosity and abundance. This month, he focuses on the fourth Yama, brahmacharya, which literally means "one who dwells in Divinity," and is generally understood to mean moderation of the senses.

A cautionary tale

Before exploring *brahmacharya*, let's take a moment to revisit the importance of the *Yamas*. I call them "the five vows of a seeker," as they provide the very foundation of self-discipline in all aspects of life, from the worldly to the spiritual. After all, who succeeds in any endeavor without self-discipline? But the *Yamas* also provide us with a cautionary tale, as it is possible to journey along the spiritual path (at least to a certain extent) without fulfilling these five vows, and there is a very good reason why this must be so. Yoga is the path of self-transformation and refinement, of molding our living to such a high order that we become universal beings. Yoga demands a lifestyle of continuous improvement toward that goal of unity.

This process of transformation is most effective when it begins from within, in the subtle body, through doing meditative practices. The inner transformation paves the way for us to change our programmed habits by unravelling the accumulation of patterns stored in the subconscious mind. And the ultimate catalyst for the subtle transformation is yogic Transmission, as happens in Heartfulness.

It also paves the way for us to adjust our outer behavior and attitudes, so that they are in sync with the inner changes, and this is our role as seekers. It means working on our character. Otherwise, as our innate human potential is progressively manifesting, more and more power can be generated, and that can only end well if our lifestyle is of the highest order. As the British Baron, John Dalberg-Acton, once said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts

absolutely." Without purity, the mind's energy is easily corrupted.

The *Yamas* are an opportunity to remove those unwanted habits that lead to power grossness and stagnation, which would otherwise jeopardize the manifestation of our true human potential. There are many stories of devoted seekers who did not let go of unwanted habits. As a result, they plunged into some shadowy area of existence which can perhaps best be described as self-inflicted purgatory or hell. It is often called "falling from grace," and the Archangel Lucifer is one of the most famous examples, falling from the right hand of God to hell. We find similar tales in all traditions and cultures, and it is always behavior and attitudes that lead someone into the abyss. The major culprits behind such behavior and attitudes are desire, ego and ignorance.

For example, how did the Jedi knight Anakin Skywalker become Darth Vader? He allowed himself to be consumed by grief, anger and fear after losing his mother Shmi and his wife Padme at the hands of evil forces. While grieving, he was easy prey for the Emperor, who took advantage of his vulnerability and fueled his negative emotions. Two things that we would normally consider to be very beautiful – a son's love for his mother, and a husband's love for his wife – sowed the seeds for his destruction, because he was not able to transcend his emotions, and allowed revenge to be stoked inside his heart.

The thing is, we are all imperfect. As a result, we are all at risk of falling from grace unless we are continually aware of our imperfections and allow ourselves to be molded and guided in the right direction with humility and faith. The *Yamas* are

the guiding principles that hold us firm and help us move upward toward unity with all life. When these five vows are fulfilled, the ego is naturally subdued, taking its role as our identity and motivating force, rather than raising its hood of self-centeredness and arrogance.

Actually, if ever we were to try to fulfill these *Yamas* for egotistical reasons, in order to feel self-righteous and morally superior, they would be of no use. It is always good to ask, “Why am I doing this?” If whatever you are doing feeds your self-importance and identity, then you are not going about it correctly.

To be able to fulfill these five vows, a regular spiritual practice is vital, and in particular the practice of Cleaning, which purifies the subtle

Many people think that *brahmacharya* means celibacy, but that is far from the extent of its meaning. A better definition would be moderation of all the senses, or chastity, given that the word “chaste” means “pure.” Chastity is purity of intention in anything that we think, feel or do.

body. Otherwise, how else are we going to remove the subconscious programs that lead to all the unwanted habits and behaviors that frustrate us?

Brahmacharya

Previously, we have explored the first three *Yamas*: *ahimsa*, removing all forms of violence, forcefulness and imposition in our character; *satya*, removing the programs of falsity that prevent us from being authentic and truthful; and *asteya*, removing the habits of stealing from our lifestyle. This month we will explore the fourth *Yama*, *brahmacharya*, which means the moderation of our senses and sensual tendencies. Given that our life on Earth requires us to interact with the world through our senses, this particular *Yama* is involved in everything that we think, feel and do other than when we are in deep sleep.

Many people think that *brahmacharya* means celibacy, but that is far from the extent of its meaning. A better definition would be moderation of all the senses, or chastity, given that the word “chaste” means “pure.” Chastity is purity of intention in anything that we think, feel or do. Is *brahmacharya* against sex? No, it is not. Sex is essential for human life to continue, and *kama* is one of the divine emotions given to humankind. As Yoga offers a life-affirming lifestyle, how could it possibly be against the procreative energy that is essential for life to exist? *Brahmacharya* is about purity of intention and conservation of energy. Ask yourself: “Is there purity of intention in my sexual relations? Is there love and compassion, honesty, and generosity, fulfilling the first three *Yamas*? Is my intention based on love and giving? Is there moderation in my sensual desires?”

Also, sensuality is not only associated with sex. Our senses can be stimulated by food, clothes, drugs, digital technology, or any other pursuit that leads to desire-based indulgence. *Brahmacharya* refers to moderation in all areas of life.

How do our senses work?

To understand the practice of *brahmacharya* better, we need to explore how the senses work. I often talk about the four main subtle bodies – consciousness (*chit*), thinking and feeling (*manas*), intelligence (*buddhi*), and ego (*ahankara*) – but when it comes to explaining how our senses work we need to understand all nineteen subtle bodies of the mind and how they function together.

Here is the list of the nineteen:

The five sense instruments or *jnanendriyas* – the ears, eyes, nose, tongue and skin.

The five energetic processes in the body or *karmendriyas* – elimination, reproduction, movement with the feet, grasping with the hands, and speaking.

The five energy flows or *pranas* – the inward flow, the downward and outward flow, the balancing and integrating flow, the ascending flow, and the circulatory flow.

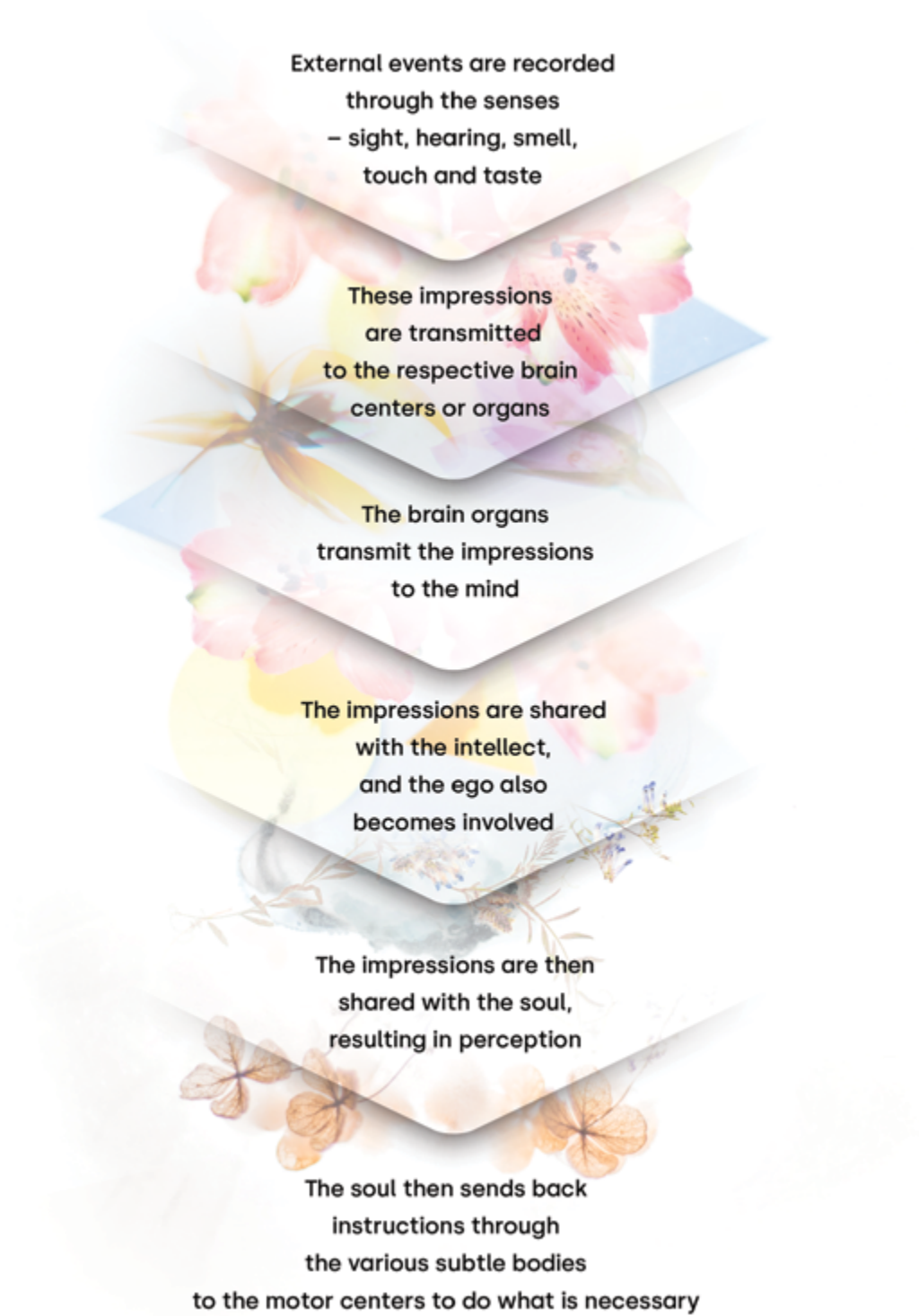
The four *ants* – consciousness (*chit*), thinking and feeling (*manas*), intelligence (*buddhi*), and ego (*ahankara*).

The first time I read Swami Vivekananda's *Complete Works*, I was struck by his understanding of this topic, long before science could fathom the workings of the sense organs and the brain. He describes the physical senses, the *jnanendriyas*, not as the organs of perception but simply the physical recording instruments. For example, the eyes are the instrument of vision but the associated nerve center in the brain is the organ of vision, and yet both of them need the mind in order for us to see. So we can say that the mind acts through both the external instrument and the internal nerve center of the brain. When we look at the world through



the eyes, the mind goes outward, whereas when we close our eyes the mind turns inward, although it is still active – we still see, even in dreams. Whether we are focused outward or inward, the mind is active, and the same is true for perception with all the senses – smell, sight, hearing, touch and taste.

When we use our five sense instruments, they record impressions and send them to the respective brain centers. These centers then carry the impressions to the mind, which are then shared with the intellect, and the ego also becomes involved. They are then transmitted through the subtlest layers of our being to the soul, which receives them. The result is perception. The soul then responds, giving instructions back through the layers of the subtle bodies to the motor centers, the *karmendriyas*, which then act. All this happens within the field of consciousness.



All three of our bodies are involved – the physical, the subtle, and the causal. The field of consciousness is the instrument through which the soul interacts with the physical body and the world.

Mastering the senses

When this field of consciousness is regulated and stilled through meditative practices, we are then able to choose whether to pay attention to one sense, to none at all, or to all the senses at once. In other words, we learn to master our senses. How is this possible? When we meditate, we close our eyes and gently turn our attention inward, eventually stilling the mind. We go beyond the influence of the senses, both external and internal. This is known as *Pratyahara*, the fifth limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga, and it is interconnected with *brahmacharya*.

With sincere practice and the support of the Guide, we may reach a stage where there is no longer any pull of the senses, and this is known as *Uparati*. It is a very high state of natural carefree freedom where the soul is no longer tethered to worldly pursuits, no longer enslaved by wishes. In this state, we are able to live in the world with a very humane and loving approach to life. It is not a detached unfeeling state – it is a loving state. As with everything in Yoga, there is a stepwise progression, beginning with the moral restraint

When we meditate, we close our eyes and gently turn our attention inward, eventually stilling the mind. We go beyond the influence of the senses, both external and internal. This is known as *Pratyahara*.

and self-discipline of *brahmacharya* and arriving at the effortless and joyful freedom of *Uparati*.

The intense craving for this freedom is known in Yoga as *Mumukshutva*, the last of the four yogic *sadhanas*. It is the craving to go beyond the realm of the senses, to reach a positive untethered state of natural attraction to God. The self-discipline and restraint of *brahmacharya* becomes carefree and loving. There is no transaction, and no desire to achieve or attain anything. Instead, there is moderation as a natural condition and an embrace of life from the highest perspective of universal love.

Going beyond the senses

This dimension of universal love is beyond the senses, beyond our sensory perception, and even beyond consciousness. We cannot “sense” God – we cannot see God, smell God, hear God, taste God or touch God. We also cannot be conscious of God, but although the divine plane is beyond the field of consciousness, we cannot move even an inch toward this plane without first refining consciousness. Eventually, we transcend consciousness to reach the Center of our being. As Vivekananda says, “Consciousness is only one of the many planes in which we work.”

So how do we access this realm? The way to the divine realm is through another type of perception, which is known as direct perception, and it is beyond sensory perception. Direct perception is “supersensuous, superconscious,” in the words of Vivekananda. In fact, all our yogic practices are designed to take us up to this realm of direct perception, which is lighter, purer, simpler, and beyond the senses. Fortunately for us, yogic Transmission gives us glimpses of it from the very beginning, so that we are able to steer our helm toward it.

When the mind is purified through meditative practices, especially when we develop a constant inner connection to our Center, our attitude shifts from sensuality to sensitivity. We become aware of all our various inner states, known as conditions.

Happiness and misery

Brahmacharya has a direct effect on our level of happiness and sadness. This is because the spectrum of happiness to sadness is only within the sensory realm. I have spoken many times about happiness being indirectly proportionate to the number of desires we have, and the intensity of those desires. Desires are created by the pull of our senses, and by how much we allow sensuality to develop unchecked. It is through the senses that we tether ourselves to the world of matter, keeping our focus on the things we like and dislike. It is through the senses that we build desires and lay down *samskaras*. It is through the senses that we are pulled externally into greater and greater entanglement and complexity. And yet, with the right training, *brahmacharya*, the senses can become our ally instead of a hindrance to our evolution.

From sensuality to sensitivity

When the mind is purified through meditative practices, especially when we develop a constant inner connection to our Center, our attitude shifts from sensuality to sensitivity. We become aware of all our various inner states, known as conditions. We also start to witness how the stimuli travel from the outside world through the senses, the brain centers, and the subtle bodies to the soul, and how instructions travel back out again from the soul through the subtle bodies and the motor centers into physical activity. All this occurs within the field of consciousness (*chit*). In common language we call this listening to the heart and acting upon the guidance given by the heart.

Sensitivity expands. As well as developing sensitivity to what is happening inside us, we also become acutely aware of things happening outside us, including the needs of others, and the atmosphere and environment in which we move. When this *Yama* is combined with the other four, compassion is a natural outcome. Our sensitivity becomes an asset to refine ourselves on this journey of continuous improvement.

In summary

When we master the process of sensory perception through the subtle bodies, going beyond the pushes and pulls of the senses, we develop the fourth *Yama* of *brahmacharya*. Our thoughts and feelings become moderate in all things. We utilize all resources according to need alone, not according to wishes and desires. As a result, there is naturally no indulgence – it is not an imposed state. A person who has reached such a high level of moderation

When we master the process of sensory perception through the subtle bodies, going beyond the pushes and pulls of the senses, we develop the fourth *Yama* of *brahmacharya*. Our thoughts and feelings become moderate in all things. We utilize all resources according to need alone, not according to wishes and desires.

has an extremely light footprint on the Earth, and does not disturb anything or anyone unnecessarily. The ego takes its rightful place as a motivating force for evolution. It also opens up the way to direct perception, which is beyond the senses.

What a light touch! Humans would joyously coexist with each other and all other life forms on this Earth if we could attain this *Yama* of *brahmacharya*! Our tone of speech would be moderate, our moods, our relationships, our way of eating, sleeping, walking, working and playing would all be moderate. There would be no need to set rules for work-life balance or go on diets to promote healthy eating patterns, and there would be no addiction. Everything would take its rightful place within the state of moderation. May it be so.







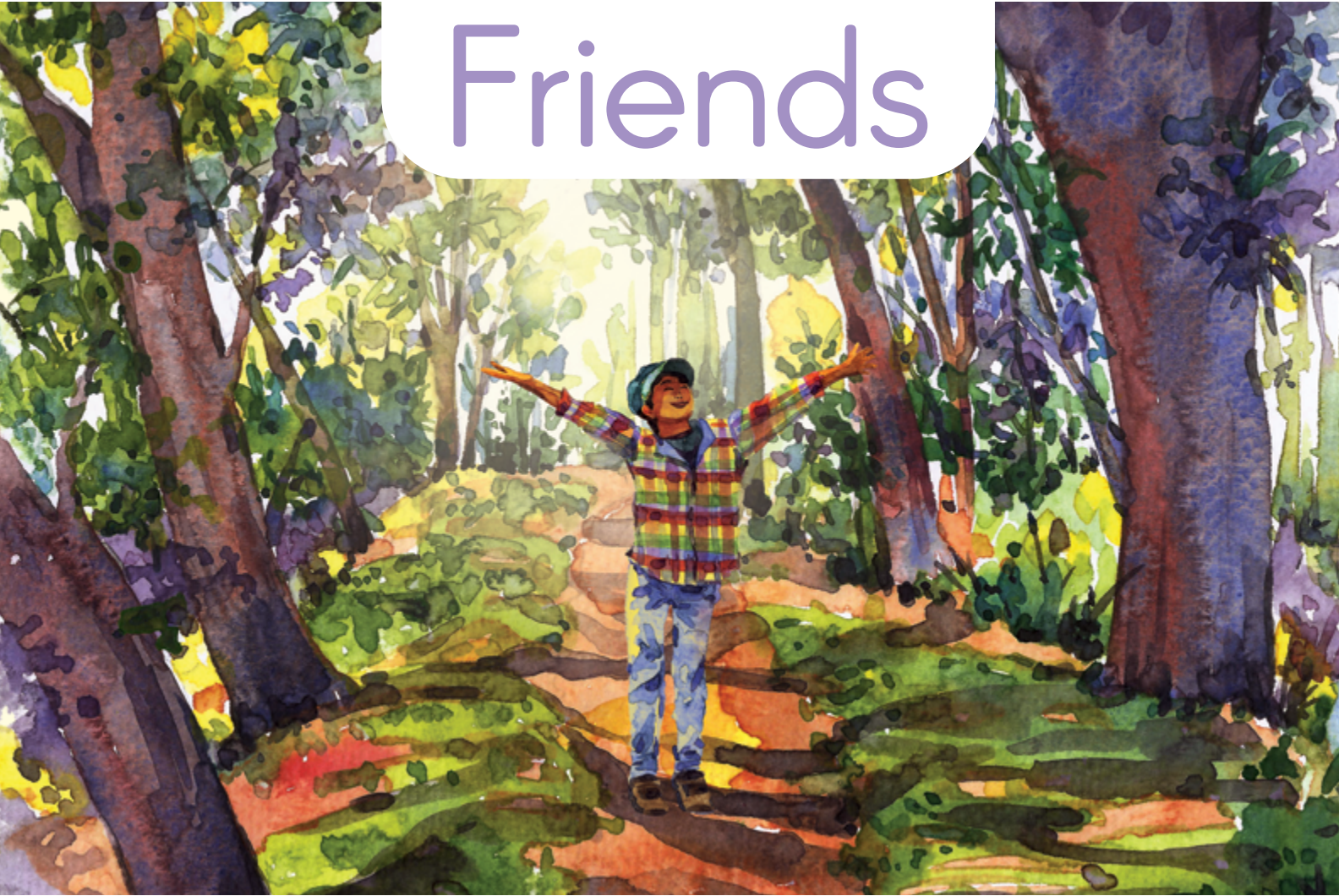
taste of life

You will succeed if you persevere, and you will find a joy in overcoming obstacles – a delight in climbing rugged paths, which you would perhaps never know if you did not sometime slip backward — if the road was always smooth and pleasant.

HELEN KELLER

Green

Friends



KARISHMA DESAI shares her journey from plant-killer to having green friends. Through childlike wonder and simply taking a moment to hug, breathe and connect with trees, she experiences the healing energy of nature, as well as enhancing the connection to her inner nature through the heart.

am embarrassed to confess that I have been a plant-killer in the past. On the odd occasion that friends would gift me a plant, I would fail to keep it alive for long. Not knowing how to care for them, they would invariably perish. Most of my friends and colleagues were intrigued by how someone who loves animals could be so naïve and ignorant about taking care of something as simple as a plant. The truth is I never took interest or paid much attention to them.

A few years ago, when my little girl started school, some of the parents in our estate decided to form a walking school bus. Two rostered parent volunteers

would walk a group of ten to twelve young kids to school and back each day. This was a great experience, as on the 15-minute walk to school we witnessed their beautiful innocent and playful banter. As they became more familiar, it was not uncommon for them to prefer to be only with their close friends and argue with the others. Often, they would be too loud and disturb the otherwise quiet neighborhood we walked through.

One morning, I noticed a few adamant kids wanting to have it their own way, so I decided to divert their attention. I asked them to observe the surroundings, and to reflect on how to appreciate the beauty of nature. Pointing to one of the trees, I explained that they are full of life just like us, and they react to love and care. The children looked amused, so to overcome their hesitation I suggested we name the trees on the way to school. I'm not sure how I came up with this suggestion, but my daughter and her friends giggled as they named each tree and started to greet them with love.

Every time the kids were noisy on these walks, I would remind them to tune into the beauty of nature around us, and they would say hello to the trees. Some of the kids were uncomfortable with the idea and did not participate, but I could see it lit a spark in others. I remember one morning when a child asked me if she could touch a tree to feel it. I must have had a strong shot of coffee that morning, as I went overboard and suggested to the kids, "Forget about touching, try hugging them like this!" The giggles never stopped, and the look of my fellow parent volunteer made me feel a bit guilty about teaching the kids something a little unusual.

I must admit that something changed in me after that casual hug. My eyes closed naturally as I hugged the tree. Generally, I do this when I pray or meditate or hug my loved ones. It is an

My eyes closed naturally as I hugged the tree. Generally, I do this when I pray or meditate or hug my loved ones. It is an instinct that connects me deeper to the core of my existence – the heart. I was intrigued that hugging the tree had the same effect on me.





instinct that connects me deeper to the core of my existence – the heart. I was intrigued that hugging the tree had the same effect on me. I realized the magnificence of these beautiful tall trees; I felt their calming essence on my heart and soul. Hesitantly, I allowed myself to explore this new experience and helplessly found my connection getting deeper and deeper. I had found my first green friend.

Our dear Mother Earth has healing energies. Trees are rooted deep within her, so it is not a wonder that, when we touch them, they may pass on this energy to help us heal. Spending just a little time in their company is therapeutic for me. As a breathing coach, I have noticed how easy it is for me to breathe when I sit close to a tree. If I spend just a few mindful minutes in their presence it restores my natural breathing pattern, so I feel as fresh as a flower.

Nowadays, when I sit under a tree sipping my mug of coffee, I remember to express my gratitude for its generosity to many forms of life. I observe how it never judges who comes to it – birds, insects, animals, wind, humans are all equal recipients of its magnanimity. I am inspired by how it consumes far

I feel that when we approach and interact with nature with an open heart like that of a child, we can seamlessly allow ourselves to connect not just with our external nature but also with our true inner Nature. My many green friends have certainly helped me experience this magic.

less than it contributes. I observe how it is just a witness to the entire process of life around it. These tall trees are in touch with the Earth as much as they are peering up to the high skies. We too can touch the skies by remaining deeply connected and grounded in our inner Nature.

I feel that when we approach and interact with nature with an open heart like that of a child, we can seamlessly allow ourselves to connect not just with our external nature but also with our true inner Nature. My many green friends have certainly helped me experience this magic.

As for houseplants, I now have many, and all of them are thriving with the food, water sunshine, love and care that I shower on them.

So what are you waiting for? Find your new green friend!

Illustrations by ARATI SHEDDE

HOPE

THINGS ARE HARD RIGHT NOW



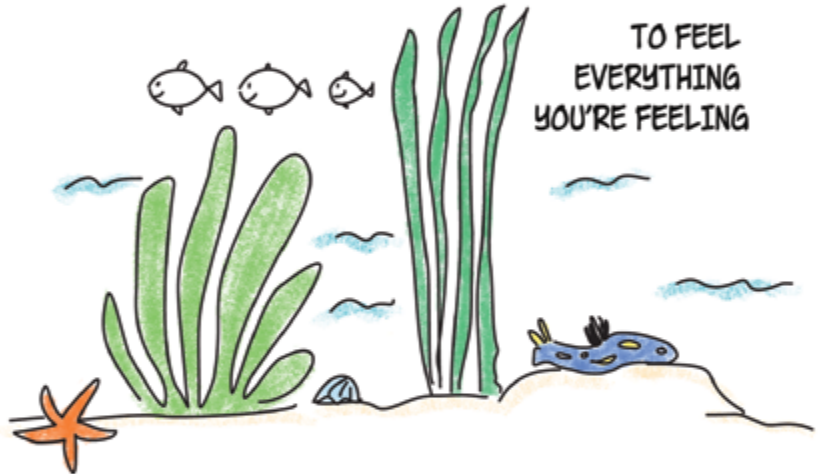
EVERY DAY
SEEMS DAUNTING



BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW
THAT IT'S OKAY



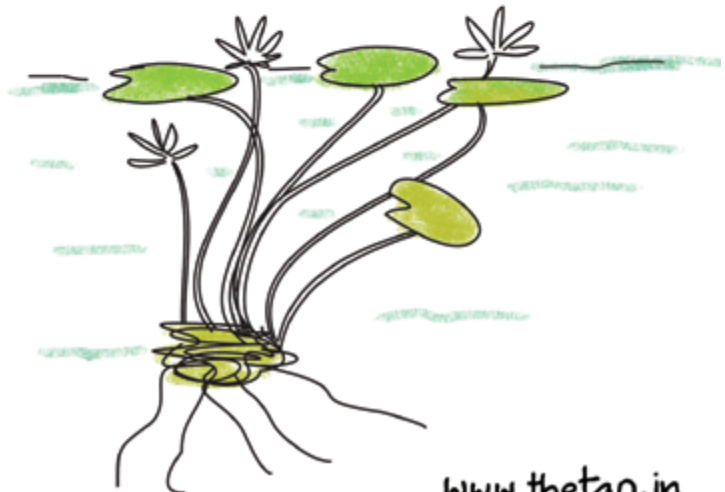
TO FEEL
EVERYTHING
YOU'RE FEELING



ONE STEP AT A TIME,
MY LOVE



THE WORLD IS ON YOUR SIDE.



Heartfulness Sport

– PART 1



Balance and Passion

PAOLO LEZZELLE draws simple parallels between the Heartfulness system and sport in this article focusing primarily on balance, relaxation, feeling, joy and passion.

wish to draw some simple parallels between aspects of the Heartfulness practices and sport, although to really do justice to this would require a long time and extensive research, because each reflection seems to attract another one. So the themes presented in this series are approached in general terms, since the peculiarities of any single sport are innumerable. The implicit invitation to sports people of all kinds and levels is to start these practices and dive deeper into Heartfulness to find the hidden pearls.

The goal of Yoga is the condition of balance. It is difficult to achieve because it is not a defined, fixed, and constant condition that we can acquire. It rather seems to be something which constantly eludes us. The more we try to make it a concrete thing, the more it slips away from us. It's one of the innumerable mysteries of the spiritual quest. Balance exists, or rather it can exist in anything, but it does not exist by itself, per se. Wonderful!

Similarly, in sport, balance is critical. Here too it is the goal par excellence. It is made up of many things, a lot of qualities put together; while in another way, it's made up of nothing at all! To feel that we are in balance means to feel that this

“nothing” is so perfect in itself that we are in need of nothing else.

Total balance, in sport and in the spiritual context, is therefore very difficult to preserve in time, because it is a light and intangible condition.

Many of us have already experienced the surprise and gratitude that result from extraordinary experiences in meditation – sometimes in the form of very subtle spirit, other times in the form of a true opening to higher knowledge, to where our limit permits. But alas! We are also familiar with the inability to keep those conditions for any period of time, for many reasons. A sad waste indeed.

In sport it is the same. Be it a fast- or long-duration sport, it's the condition of focus and full involvement that makes the difference. We try to allow this condition to take hold of us and let it act by itself, on our behalf, so to say. In sport, as in music, it is called being “in the flow,” letting what is beautiful in us manifest freely.

If meditation is a constant education in higher perception, practice in sport is the preparation to



be ready in any sense for competition, the true testing ground of our attainment.

The Heartfulness method speaks of technique, perseverance and sincere commitment, but most of all it speaks of feelings. Were our feelings not our major guides, it would be an empty container, and sooner or later it would become a sterile, boring routine.

Putting together technique and sensitive introspection is not a simple job. Some people find it easier to rely on one approach, others prefer the other way. If we think about the evolution of the innumerable training methods of the last twenty years, we find that they seem to swing between two opposite extremes – technical improvement on one side and incentive to inner perception on the other. In the middle is a bit of everything.

Most sports require the right mix of strength, endurance, reactivity, fluency, and much more. These are needed both in practice and competition.

A high-level athlete can draw what they need in the moment, relying on pure instinct as well as on specific acquired capacities. Throughout this process, a relaxed condition is an important prerequisite.

All sports need a basal condition of relaxation. By this, I don't mean comfortable and passive inactivity, either mental or physical, for example, when we are sunbathing. On the contrary, it's being in a clear and tranquil state of presence to whatever happens inside and around us. It is not by chance that in Heartfulness we have a technique of relaxation to be performed before meditation.

Most sports require the right mix of strength, endurance, reactivity, fluency, and much more. These are needed both in practice and competition. Furthermore, we need the Queenly ability – the ability to change. I would say that this is an art more than an ability. Getting out of our comfort zone, finding new motivation to train at the next level, looking for different strategies in competition ... few sportspeople have a natural talent for these assets, though they can learn with serious dedication.

For a practitioner committed to the spiritual quest, and for athletes who give themselves totally to the sport, to be in the condition of balance is like piercing effortlessly through a hurdle-ridden maze, always pointing higher despite results.

We need to change to improve. Yes, but it is easier said than done! Unfortunately, we know how much our habits and complexities keep us stagnating in the same trends, despite our efforts. In the sporting field, this often happens because we make the mistake of seeking change only through hard work and extreme abnegation.

Work is essential, of course, but the way is another: There is no real change without joy and passion. Even at the level of the nervous system, it's only pleasure that brings forth the acceptance of new modalities, not fatigue. Undesired efforts and exhausting training sessions can give good results in the short term (though with an extensive amount of energy that sooner or later will present the bill), but it's only passion that makes barriers appear exciting and makes the long road look like a joyful and enriching journey.

All this and much more comes under the umbrella of balance. To perceive it as a strength having its own life within us, guiding us out into the world, is true manna. For a practitioner committed to the spiritual quest, and for athletes who give themselves totally to the sport, to be in the condition of balance is like piercing effortlessly through a hurdle-ridden maze, always pointing higher despite results.



HEARTSAPP



Log in to your heart.
Meditate with a
trainer. Observe.
Transform.

Download at
→ heartsapp.org

info@heartsapp.org

FIND YOUR COMMUNITY



Find a trainer or
meditation center
near you!

→ <https://heartfulness.org/en/connect-with-us/>



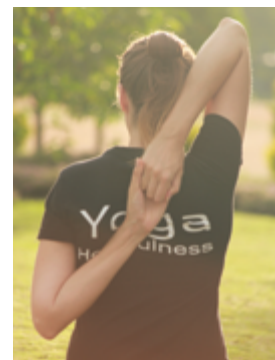
MEDITATION MASTERCLASS

3 masterclasses

In these online
masterclasses, you
will learn the practical
benefits of meditation
and other yogic
practices.

Masterclasses are
available online each
day after you sign
up and accessible
throughout the day.
Each class runs
between 35 and 45
minutes.

→ [heartfulness.org/
masterclass](https://heartfulness.org/masterclass)



योग

Post Graduate
Diploma in Advanced
Yoga.

Learn to teach the
eight limbs of Yoga.
Merge the traditional
art of Yoga with a
modern professional
approach.

DEGREE IN OM

Heartfulness Yoga
Teacher Training Course

→ [heartfulness.org/
yoga-trainers](https://heartfulness.org/yoga-trainers)

[in.wellness@
heartfulness.org](mailto:in.wellness@heartfulness.org)



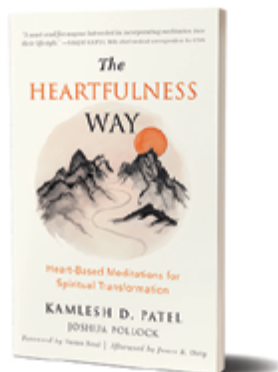
#1 BESTSELLER

**DESIGNING
DESTINY**
by DAAJI

How meditative practices lead to changes in lifestyle, both personal and in relationships, which lead to greater freedom in designing our destiny.

Available at designingdestiny.com, on Amazon, and at all leading bookstores.

→ designingdestiny.com



#1 BESTSELLER

**THE HEARTFULNESS
WAY**
by DAAJI

In this inspiring text, you will discover a special collection of meditations that awaken the depths of human potential and initiate a mystical inner journey. In this process, the heart becomes a perennial source of wisdom and guidance to help you navigate life's twists and turns and lead a life more connected to yourself and others.

→ Available through heartfulnessway.com, at major bookstores and on Amazon.

*Study
buddy*

YOU-NIVERSITY
Meditation &
The Evolution of
Consciousness

In this video series, you'll learn tools for living a happy and fulfilling life.

A Heartfulness and
Udemy Video Series.
Register today.

→ daaji.org/udemy



CONSCIOUS LIVING
IN STOCK

HFNLlife strives to bring products to make your life simple and convenient.

We do our tiny bit to fulfill your material needs by bringing you a set of curated partners in apparel, accessories, eye-care, home staples, organic foods and more. The affiliation of our partner organizations with Heartfulness Institute helps in financially sustaining the programs which we conduct in various places across the world.

→ hfnlife.com

The Mega Conservation project

Nurturing Biodiversity and Ecological Sustainability

heartfulness
purity weaves destiny
Green

2013 / 2020



The Rainforest Project



The Deccan Plateau Project



The Food Forest Project



The Yatra Garden

Contribute to this cause at
heartfulness.org/en/green

An environmental initiative committed to nurturing biodiversity, indigenous and critically endangered species. An ex-situ conservation site, which envisions a space where humankind and nature co-exist in harmony.

Special Gifts

for Your Special Ones from Heartyculture

Signature Blends
Tea Gift Box



Diffuser with
Essential oils



Honey
Gift Box



DISCOVER THE JOY
of Heartful
SERVICES & SOLUTIONS



www.htcinc.com



www.caretech.com



www.ciber.com

USA | UK | Germany | UAE | India | Malaysia | Singapore | Indonesia | Australia

Reimagine technology to accelerate your business