



With this new year,
resolve
 to meditate
 to achieve



Join us for 3 free online masterclasses in meditation,
 conducted by the teacher of Heartfulness, Kamlesh D. Patel.

2, 3, 4 January 2017

Times:

The masterclasses will be available online each day, starting at midnight, and accessible throughout the day. Each class runs about 1 hour.

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**02
JAN**

RELAX. EXPAND CONSCIOUSNESS

In the first class, learn the Heartfulness relaxation for physical well-being, as well as the Heartfulness guided meditation on the source of light within your own heart.

**03
JAN**

UNWIND. SIMPLIFY

In the second class, be guided through a simple rejuvenative technique to unwind the mind at the end of the day, to let go of stresses and emotions, and simplify your life.

**04
JAN**

CONNECT. WITH YOUR INNER SELF

In the third class, learn to connect with your inner Self by listening to the heart's voice. Observe your deepest feelings, make wise choices and weave your destiny.



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 Through meditation, motivation

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Heartfulness
Through meditation, calm

Relaxation

Sit comfortably and close your eyes very softly and very gently.

Let's begin with the toes. Wiggle your toes. Now feel them relax.

Relax your ankles and feet. Feel energy move up from the earth... up your feet to your knees
relaxing the legs.

Relax your thighs. The energy moves up your legs ... relaxing them.

Now, deeply relax your hips ... stomach ... and waist.

Relax your back. From the top to the bottom the entire back is relaxed.

Relax your chest ... and shoulders. Feel your shoulders simply melting away...

Relax your upper arms. Relax each muscle in your forearms ... your hands ... right up to your
fingertips.

Relax the neck muscles. Move your awareness up to your face. Relax the jaw ... mouth ... nose ...
eyes ... earlobes ... facial muscles ... forehead ... all the way to the top of your head.

Feel how your whole body is now completely relaxed.

Move your attention to your heart. Rest there for a little while. Feel immersed in the love and light
in your heart.

Remain still and quiet, and slowly become absorbed in yourself.

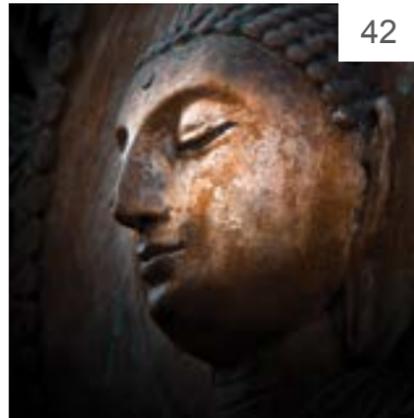
Remain absorbed for as long as you want, until you feel ready to come out.

————— ● —————
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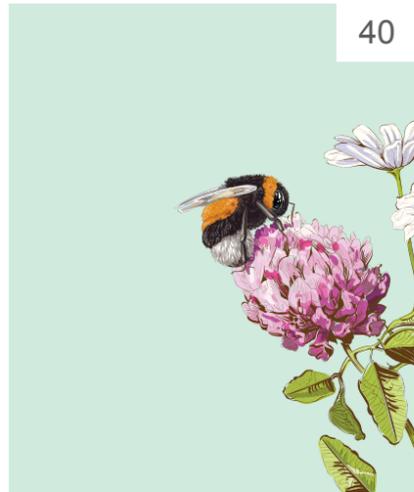
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EMBRACING *Change*

Dear readers,

Another year has passed, and hopefully we are all another year wiser! The festive season has also passed – an important time of year in most cultures and religions, signifying the winter or summer solstice, as well as endings and new beginnings. It can be a joyful time and also sad, probably both, depending on circumstances. Certainly only the hard-hearted are immune to the feelings and memories of family members who are not with us, as well as the delights of family gatherings and celebrations, and young children's enjoyment during Christmas, Hannukah, Milad un-Nabi and Bodhi Day.

The beginning of January is when we evaluate what has been, and resolve to realize our hopes and dreams for the coming year. It is a time for change. The list of New Year's resolutions can be endless: lose weight, get fit, eat healthier, drink less, be more compassionate and accepting with our loved ones, work colleagues and friends, spend more time with the people that matter, work smarter, spend less ... and on it goes.

What if there were some simple practices that would help us to embrace these changes naturally and easily? Well there are. The ancient art of meditation is designed to clear the mind, open the heart, and allow us to access our inner potential, so that decision-making becomes effortless, and we learn how to embrace change. Woolly brain syndrome disappears. Confidence and courage radiate from the heart. It is not magic – work is required – but the results are there for all those who wish to make the effort.

If you would like to give yourselves a gift for the New Year, please join us for a series of three masterclasses in meditation on the 2, 3 and 4 January 2017, conducted by Kamlesh D. Patel (www.heartfulness.org/masterclass).

And Happy New Year from all of us at Heartfulness Magazine.
May 2017 be filled with peace, love and joy.

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James is the author of *Into The Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart* (Avery, 2016) and is co-founder of the Center for Compassion & Altruism Research & Education (CCARE) at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, USA.



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Josh Bulriss

A passionate devotion to capturing the core of culture has driven this New York photographer to wander the world.

Josh's ultimate goal is to enhance his viewer's awareness of the everyday beauty that this world has to offer. He challenges his viewers to look deeper into his images to capture the innermost soul of his subjects. With a thread of inner peace that emanates throughout his work, Josh holds just one mantra to his heart: "The world is my studio."



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Celebrate the New Year

What changes will you make in the New Year?

Here are the most popular New Year's Resolutions we gathered from our readers:

Fitness	Positive thoughts
Lose weight	Happiness
Healthy food	Inner calm
Natural sleep patterns	Realize goals

How will you achieve them?

Relax when stressed

Meditate to expand consciousness
and regulate thoughts

Rejuvenate the mind at the end of
each day to release heaviness

Connect with your own source
before sleeping to wake refreshed

Exercise regularly

Eat simple, natural food

Go to bed early to be in tune with
natural cycles

Remember your goals and focus
attention on them

Treat others with great kindness

Accept whatever life brings
you graciously, with a cheerful
disposition

Be grateful for everything

BETWEEN STIMULUS

and response - PART 2 -



IN CONVERSATION WITH
DR JAMES R DOTY



In Part 1, DR DOTY explored the evolutionary advantage of compassion in human beings and its relationship with our physiological responses. In Part 2, he takes us further into aspects of human behavior that relate to compassion and collective social issues.

INTERVIEWED BY JOHN MALKIN, AUGUST 2016

JD Another one of those is this inherent desire to be tribal in nature, and again, there is an evolutionary reason. We talked about hunter-gatherer tribes as our primary survival strategy and we know that people tend to gather or connect with others who look like them, act like them and share the same socio-economic status, culture, religion and color. Why? When you are with people who are like you, what happens? Your sense of fear, anxiety or threat diminishes.

The problem is that this type of interaction can act as an echo chamber to reinforce negative behavior or a perception of fear or threat, which results in you being closed to the opinions of other people and groups. Or you may feel a desire to eliminate them because of this false notion that they are going to threaten your existence. It is often a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is a natural state of being, unfortunately; we know that it can be activated and we have seen this happen. You alluded to the political environment, where you see groups stoking fear and anxiety to engage this primitive part of us that responds to fear or threat. This results in individuals identifying with groups that think or act like them in the false notion that this is protecting them.

Politicians and others have used this reality for their own purposes for millennia. The problem is that it is not a long-term survival strategy, and it is

...in the context of our modern global society; the reality is that what happens in one part of the world can profoundly affect another part of the world.

certainly not a long-term solution in the context of our modern global society; the reality is that what happens in one part of the world can profoundly affect another part of the world. We are no longer in this position of small hunter-gatherer tribes where we can engage in conflict in small areas and have no big effect on the rest of the world.

Frankly, our survival demands that we gain self-awareness of these issues. We need to understand this reality and also that, in fact, there are resources for all. If we change our behavior, look into ourselves, and understand the negative

Technology and digital technologies have had a very profound positive affect in many domains and allow us to live as we do today. That being said, what we do know is that for some individuals, as you point out, these types of technologies do not truly create a connection with others.

attributes that we have, and our biases toward others – we call these cognitive biases – it can actually lead to a society that works for everyone’s benefit, in which we care for those who look and act like us, our tribe if you will, and also care for others outside our close-knit group.

As an example, if we took one week’s worth of the monies spent every year on military technology, we could provide education for tens of millions of children from kindergarten to year 12. And that is just one week. Imagine what we could do if we markedly decreased expenditure on military technology and armies! How many people could

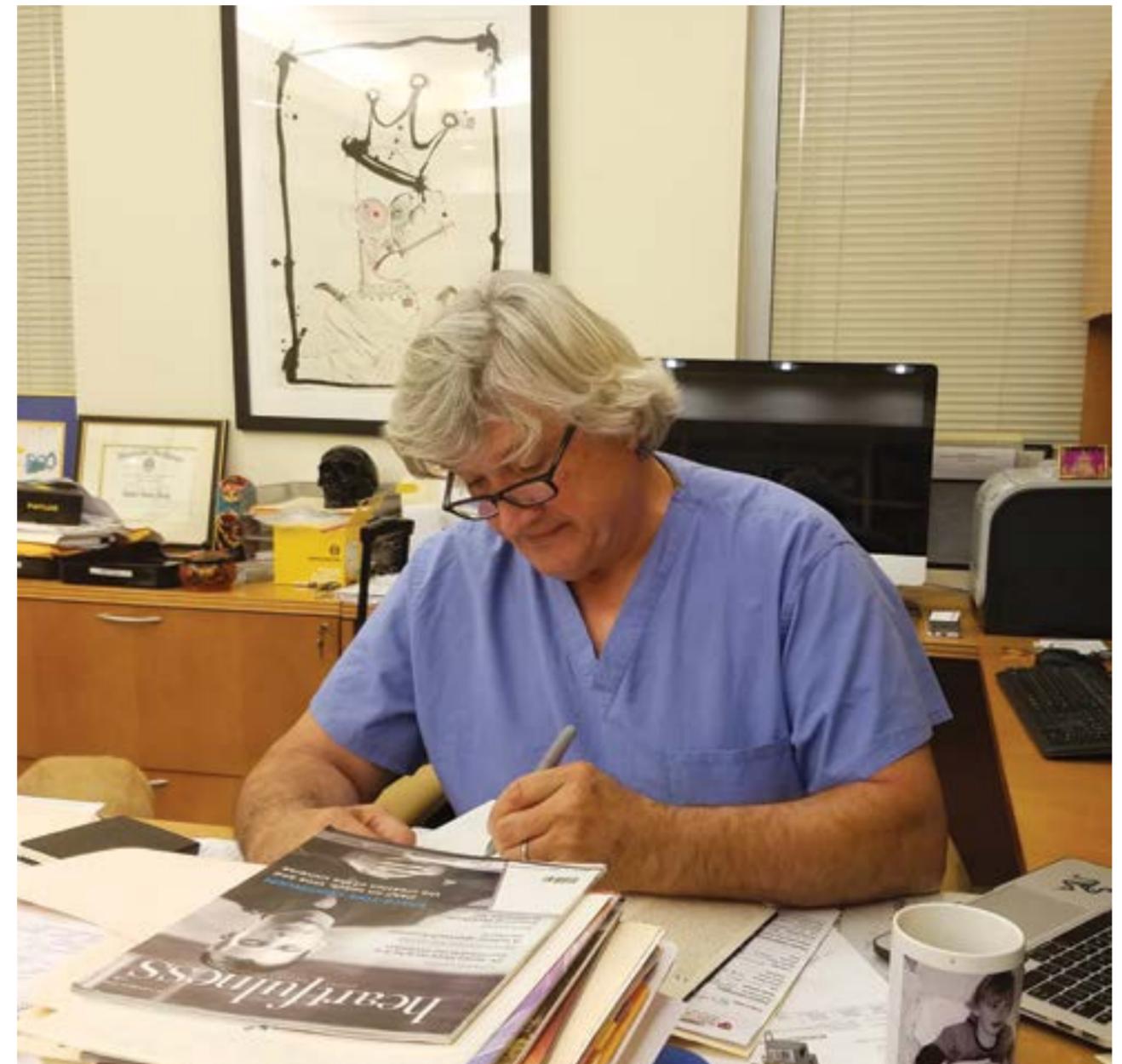
we feed? How many buildings could we build? How many people could we educate? This ultimately has to be the paradigm as we look toward the future.

Q I am curious about the effect digital technology is having on human compassion. I am reading in studies that as people are looking at screens so much and interacting with machines more and more, they have a diminished capacity for empathy and more difficulty reading facial and emotional cues from others and recognizing their own emotions. What is your sense of how the new digital technologies are affecting human compassion?

JD This is a two-edged sword. Technology and digital technologies have had a very profound positive affect in many domains and allow us to live as we do today. That being said, what we do know is that for some individuals, as you point out, these types of technologies do not truly create a connection with others. It is a reality that we as a species are profoundly social and when we do not connect with others we are lonely.

As an example, in the United States one quarter of people when they are suffering, hurt or are in pain, feel that they have no one to share that with or be comforted by. Also remember that we have an epidemic in the West of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, stress and depression. You simply have to look at whether it is digital technologies or modernity in regard to what has happened.

Two to three hundred years ago we lived in multi-generational environments and most people grew up in one part of the country. Often times their parents, grandparents, siblings and children all lived in close proximity, if not the same building.



They stayed in the same place for the entire length of their life and as a result each individual knew that they were part of a community and that community cared for and nurtured them. It accepted them for the good parts of themselves and also the bad parts and still loved them.

In modern society many of us do not have that type of environment. When growing up we often

times move from city to city, so there is no stability and acceptance in the interactions we have with others. As we become adults we move away to go to college and then have a job where we are separated from siblings and parents. We go to places where we know no one. And that creates an environment for many people of loneliness, despair and anxiety. When we include then the effects of digital technology, which can make this even worse, it can have a profound negative affect.

We also know that when a person is lonely or anxious this leads often times to rumination and makes the situation worse.

That being said, we also know that there are certain digital or artificial technologies that can have a positive benefit. Some of these are technologies that allow us to connect with people who are like us and share our interests, which is wonderful. Robots are being used to interact with people who are lonely or elderly and can potentially even perform aged care, if you will. There is evidence that we can develop a positive relationship with these artificial entities. But these artificial entities are artificial entities. They will never replace a human, even though in certain contexts they can be beneficial. So, it is a two-edged sword.

As we see the evolution of artificial intelligence and machine learning, this leads into another potentially very difficult issue, because who is behind all this? Who are the manipulators? If we examine the issues of free will, we appreciate that many of the actions we engage in are related to environmental cues on a subconscious level. We also understand now that we can be manipulated. And when there are terabytes of data on how individuals move, and we have the ability to collect and analyze immense amounts of information about an individual, it potentially means that the subconscious cues can be manipulated in very negative ways. These may have no negative effect on the savannah in Africa – in fact they were part of our survival mechanism – but in a modern environment we can be manipulated by a small group.

In some ways it is already happening; there is a whole field called Neuromarketing, which takes

advantage of our biases and utilizes this knowledge to motivate us or manipulate us to buy things or do certain actions for the benefit of others. This has to be kept in mind, because if there are no safety checks it will lead to a small group of people being able to manipulate large segments of our society.

Q I am very interested and concerned about what you are talking about. It's remarkable that there is worldwide warrantless surveillance by governments and corporations collecting data and keeping track of people. It is well beyond what George Orwell imagined. It seems people don't quite realize this is going on. With so much information generally, people seem overwhelmed and interested in one topic for an hour and then something else happens and they move on to the next item.

JD That is probably a discussion we could engage in for a long time.

To be continued ●

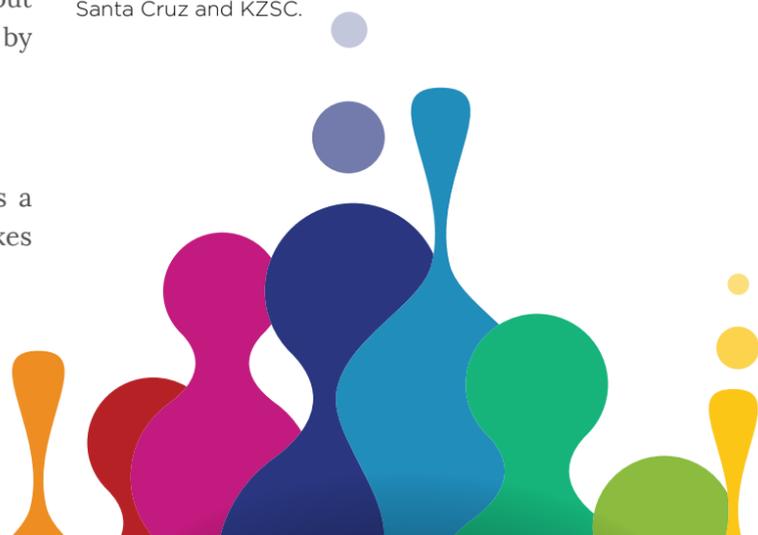
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Between stimulus and response there is a space.
In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

- VIKTOR E. FRANKL





The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.

CARL JUNG

When I was half asleep

N.S. NAGARAJA writes about sleep, dreams, cartoon heroes, near death experiences, twisting space and possibilities. What can our senses really tell us about the world around us and inside us?



Yes, I should have just slept that night. I was half asleep and ready to rest. The inseparable, my phone, caught my attention, and so I checked one last time for the day. There was a message from an old school mate, and it said a thing or two, ending with, “On matters of God, I am undecided.” I stared at it for some time not knowing how or what to say.

This spiritual field of feelings is not easy to explain to the intellectual mind. I felt, “Intellect of this kind could be considered as a state of ignorance for the other kind!” In the same half asleep, I happened to read a short article on Near Death Experiences, which said that NDE research is only records of the experiences of people who went through it, and that is not scientific enough. It said that NDE could simply be a neurobiological condition produced under low oxygen levels in the brain, leading to hallucination. How convincing (not)!

I thought, “Less oxygen leads one to biological death, is it not?” But this particular article was trying to convince us that one day science will be able to show that NDE is a creation of the brain and there will be methods to simulate that condition in the brain. Long ago, when I started meditation, I used to think that meditation could just be triggering a chemical change in the brain. Subsequently, my brain allowed for many possibilities and helped me transcend the trap of theories so that I could explore reality with an open mind. The same questions, time and again, cross many minds. Now it was surely time to sleep.



I slipped into sleep with some sort of awareness. Of course it was not a NDE for sure! Now I was in a dreamy state in which there was an idea: what if, now, at this moment, the physical space around me has another dimension? I exist in this same physical space, not visible, not perceivable to others in the same physical space. Assume that this space is twisted somehow. I am standing in this twisted space. Others around can't see the twisted space until they get into it. Voila!

This idea in the hands of a dreamer could become another blockbuster movie: no time travel, just a twisted space. Of course my very young friends will argue that this is nothing new to DC comics writers. They may even say that The Flash does it all the time. Anyway, this twisted space made me think: all our understanding is based on input received from our sensory system. This input is processed by our intellect to create a model of the world or whatever we are trying to comprehend.

It is a well-known fact that our sensory organs can only perceive a limited spectrum of input. For example, human ears can process sounds within the range of 20hz to 20khz frequency. That too depends on the sensitivity factor of a person's ear

and even more so upon the mind of the listener. Anything beyond, we simply cannot hear. Elephants can hear a wider range of sounds than us!

Even a healthy eye can only see so much. There are worlds out there, for example the universe inside an atom; let us admit it, we cannot see it. As of now, most of this Nano world is seen through a mathematical model. An approximate, unverified model, in the world of good science, is a possibility. It is another attempt to see the unseen reality of the world.

For most of us, our observations and understanding are based on a limited spectrum of data from our basic sense organs. This is a severe limitation to good science, and there is continuous effort to expand the vision. So where does it leave us now? A simple possibility. The unseen intellect has enormous processing capacity. Likewise, our 'feeling' faculty has enormous potential. We must allow this 'feeling' faculty to gather more data. Use the sense of 'feeling' to understand reality. Let us develop the 'feeling' part of us, and keep exploring and expanding.

Our yogic Masters have been saying that the presence of the higher existence is a matter of feeling in the initial stages. In the spirit of science, we must seek higher reality. Maybe one day, there will be instruments to gather data from feeling to satisfy the intellect.

Until that time, develop what we have already: the fine instrument called the heart, which can feel almost anything. Through meditation, let us develop it.

Ending note for The Flash: there is no need to move at the speed of light to transcend this world. Try Heartfulness meditation! ●

To complain is always non-acceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness.

ECKHART TOLLE



THE SCIENCE OF Appreciation

VEENA VERMA and NEHHA LOHIYA explore the possibilities for global peace that start with learning the art and science of appreciation.

The corporate business world has given it a very unpleasant and gross terminology which we know as 'ego massaging'. But if we go deeper and look at the science of how we are designed as humans, especially our hearts, we would realize that it is not about the ego of a person, but more to do with how the spiritual anatomy of our hearts work.

Let us try to explain what the great spiritual masters have discovered in this field. Our heart has the dual qualities of both a positive and negative nature – good and bad, light and heavy, right and wrong – and putting this in scientific logic, a negative quality would obviously create a negative field and a positive quality a positive one.

One of the many such qualities which can prove to be a very effective tool for reconnecting with one and all, and hence the ultimate Source, is appreciation towards one another. Appreciation means identifying that genius in each and every one of us and expressing a feeling of happiness to have come across that piece of art in every being. It means being gratified to that ultimate Source of existence for manifesting it through that particular human being.

When we appreciate the sacred quality of another being, this attitude and vibe of appreciation creates a very coherent positive field around both the hearts and revives a very sacred link between our hearts, which goes deep down to our Soul. It reconnects each one of us with that pure energy which exists in our hearts as a part of that one ultimate Source from which we have all descended. Thus we tap into the eternal connection, taking it beyond this physical realm towards the eternal bond of existence. This makes the relationship and the journey ahead with the other person very smooth and coherent, empowering each other with continuous exchange of positive energy.

Scientifically, the point from which the expression originates governs where it reaches, so if we appreciate from our heart it will go straight to the heart of the other being, crossing all the gross and subtle layers of ego, straight to the cause of our existence, which is the soul.

So here is an experiment:

Let's rewire our brain and reshape and refine our mind from the attitude of ego massaging to appreciating the pure sacred genius in all others.



Let's do this in everything that we do, whether it is in our home, our workplace, social gatherings, a simple street walk, or any other activity.

We just need to change our attitude, which can take a complete 360-degree turn, and revolutionize the way we evolve and our experiences in life. Life as we all know it is a cognitive journey, so we can make this a journey of celebrating all the genius manifested in each one of us coming from the ultimate Source, the supreme consciousness.

What would happen if we inculcate this attitude of appreciation and start implementing it in our day to day life with every human being we meet? We would collectively re-establish the egregore of love and peace where each one of us is coherent with one another. This would lead to global harmony and peace.

This simple practice of appreciation can transform the planet to a coherent and harmonizing place, where every heart is connected with this pure and sanctified energy of appreciation and love.

Maybe we can remove the mundane concept of massaging egos, which leads to a feeling of distress, and revive in ourselves the beautiful blissful feeling of appreciation for each other.

First try greeting one another with a heart full of love, and make this world a place to celebrate. Celebrate our existence and the golden opportunity we have of human life – to evolve and expand our consciousness to the higher realms of existence.

Let's meditate, Let's appreciate, Let's reconnect, Let's celebrate! ●



HARPREET KALRA discusses the issue of victimization in the workplace, and his experience of what to do about it. How much responsibility are we willing to take to change these patterns?



Am I the victim or am I the one victimizing?

It had been two months since I joined MCS Enterprises in their Strategy & Planning department. I prepared the first draft of a financial model and submitted it to my boss Linda for her review. After a few hours, Linda called me to her room. “Did I ask you to make these assumptions?” she screamed.

“No,” I said softly. “You are not at a level where you can make assumptions on your own,” scoffed Linda, walking out of the room.

Conversations like these were a regular affair for me: in corporate jargon, business as usual.

Micromanaging me, not giving me the creative liberty to think, unclear directions on how to go about a work task, harsh criticism, pretty much summed up my relationship with my boss at MCS.

“When do I leave this job?” “Should I resign straightaway?” “Do I have the money to pay my mortgage?” were some of the thoughts that flooded my mind as I drudged back towards my desk.

There are demanding bosses, there are difficult bosses, there are collaborative bosses, there are easy bosses, and then there are psychopaths. Research suggests that one in every five corporate bosses is a psychopath. I knew I was dealing with one at MCS.

I believed most of my previous bosses were good, though they had a few traits that were unacceptable to me. After dealing with Linda, I indeed realized the goodness of my previous bosses. I would have gladly accepted all their unacceptable traits if I had had a chance.

I was in pain, and slowly my underlying thought pattern started to shift towards self pity: “Why me?” “I am being targeted,” “I am being victimized.” In a short span of time, I was habitually wearing the victim hat. SO I BELIEVED!

It had been a few months since I had started practicing meditation. One day, after my morning meditation, as I sat in a quiet contemplative mood, an inner voice within me echoed: “Every victim identity is a perpetrator of crime given the change in circumstances.” I could not fully comprehend my inner voice. I wrote it in my daily diary and signed off.

I had a business visit to Paris lined up to meet our new research agency team, so as soon as I reached the office, I went to meet Priya, who was our office

In some situations, I am the victim. In some situations, I am the one victimizing others. This is the reason I am suffering. The very same tendencies in Linda that hurt me are the ones present within me, although with different intensity.

manager. Priya took care of the administrative work of MCS and the logistics of the MCS staff.

“Have my tickets to Paris not been booked yet?” I asked sternly, my tone admonishing Priya for not having done her work.

“I am trying to get the best fares. Give me some time. I should be able to get your bookings done by tomorrow,” said a somber Priya.

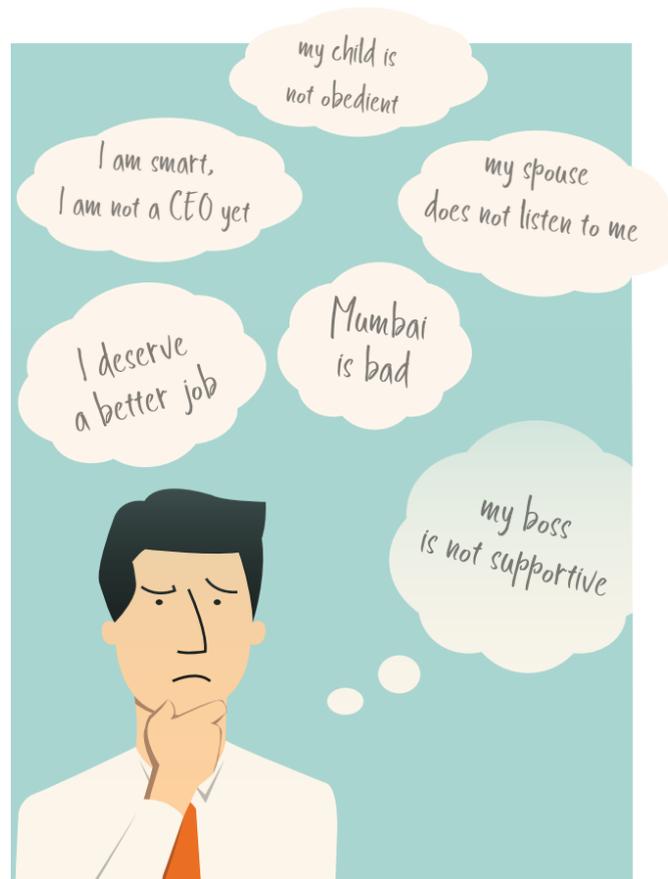
“Really?” I said sarcastically, with a dismissive look as I barged towards my desk.

In the evening, as I drove home, the office conversation with Priya that morning played out in my mind – the somber tone of Priya and the disappointed look on her face. Just the way my tone and look was when I was with Linda. Soon, the essence of my inner voice from the morning seeped within.

In some situations, I am the victim. In some situations, I am the one victimizing others. This is the reason I am suffering. The very same tendencies in Linda that hurt me are the ones present within me, although with different intensity.

In fact, the trait of Linda that pinched me the most was the trait most strongly present within me.

That morning, I could not comprehend my inner voice. Perhaps I did not want to comprehend it. After all, I had an ego, and how could my ego without resistance cherish the idea of believing that it was laced with the very same behavioral



traits and tendencies it loathed in others?

When we feel for others, when we sympathize with others, we would like to believe it is out of genuine compassion. Is it indeed compassion? Or is it the ego veiled under a garb?

What happens when things improve at the victim's end? The body language and behavior of the victim changes. The person becomes confident, assertive and happy. And this changes our perception of the other person.

Earlier, we had labeled the person a victim. Now we label the same person as someone with a lot of attitude, who is high and mighty. Worse, we

become absolutely intolerant of even his slightest off-the-track demeanor.

The moment the ego realizes that the other person is no longer going through pain, the ego no longer identifies with the other person. Why?

Because now it is no longer on the same plane as the other person. Which plane? The plane of pain. As unfortunate as it is, the above behavior is seen in our most intimate relationships. Hence, relationships rooted in sympathy suffer a painful ordeal.

As I became aware of this harsh reality, it was a matter of time before its acceptance seeped into my system. That acceptance though has worked very well for my overall well-being. It has substantially reduced my behavior of swinging like a pendulum, swinging between the emotional extremes of affection – harshness, sympathy – criticism, sadness – joy, etc.

A sense of balance and calmness has seeped in, although it is not yet the permanent state of being I would like to have.

The awareness and acceptance which subsequently led to balance and calmness has not come without effort. Much of the effort has been directed towards being aware of my thoughts, my emotions, my behavior – when I am alone with myself, and when I am with others.

In this pursuit of change and happiness, my strongest ally has been meditation. How has meditation helped? By untying the knots I have

been tying for so long. What knots? The knots of 'I am' and 'I am not' reflected against the backdrop of 'he/she is' and 'he /she is not'.

I am smart, I am not a CEO yet, my child is not obedient, my spouse does not listen to me, my boss is not supportive, Mumbai is bad, I deserve a better job.

The list can, perhaps, fathom the entire Universe.

Why could I not untie these knots on my own without meditation?

First, I did not want to untie them. These knots defined me, rather, I defined myself through these knots. Untying them meant I had to let go of a part of me, a part of who I believed I was.

Second, and more important, to untie the knots, I should have known in the first place that these were knots. How to untie them was secondary. To me, these knots were so internal to my system that I believed it was normal to live with them.

With meditation, as the hyperactivity of the mind quietened, a clearer view of my relationships emerged, with people, with work, with health, with success. The knots started becoming apparent, paving the way for understanding how I behave, more importantly, why I behave the way I do.

The knot of victim identification discussed here is one of many knots ●

Disclaimer

Names of the organizations and people mentioned in the article have been changed to protect identity.

The Evolution of Consciousness Series

THE *Stillness* PARADOX

In 2017, Kamlesh D. Patel continues his series on the evolution of consciousness, with an article on the paradox of stillness that manifests with an expanding and evolving consciousness.

The above quote of Einstein resonates with some ideas I have been thinking about lately on consciousness. Imagine a beautiful flower blooming in the garden. If you run past it you will not be able to appreciate its beauty, whereas if you are walking by you can enjoy it more, and if you stand still in front of it you will appreciate its beauty even more. If you are flying, then you will not even see the flower below you on the earth. So when we are moving rapidly, we miss out on many things.

The mind is even faster than any physical movement. When the mind is moving rapidly from one object to another, one subject to another, one venture to another, what you miss is the blooming of the flower that is inside you. You are not merely missing out on the details, you miss out completely on the existence of the flower itself.

Now what is that flower? It is your soul.

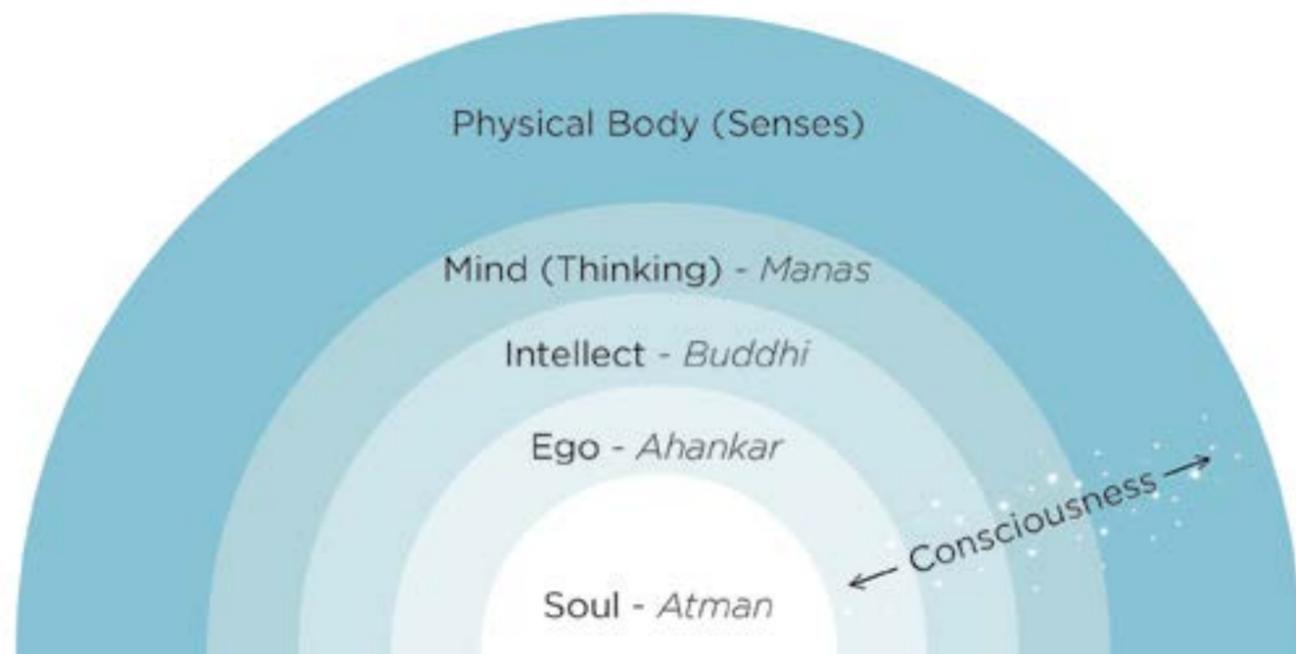
Let's explore this idea further and ask a question: is it possible to move at speed and still be present in each moment? Can we reach a critical speed where we stand still in movement?

To understand this better, let's revisit the diagram we have of the various bodies of a human being.

The soul is the center of our being, around which we have the four main subtle bodies that we know as the mind. The first is consciousness, the canvas that is the field or fabric of the subtle body. Then there is the ego, which is our identity, so it is also deeply entwined with the individual soul. Then

He who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed.

—Albert Einstein



comes intellect, which allows us to discern and make choices, and then at the surface level of the mind we have the thinking function. And then there is the physical body, which is the outermost layer.

If noticed keenly, it is always the 'subtle' that supports the 'less subtle' in its wake. The soul is the subtlest, followed by consciousness, ego, intellect, mind and finally the physical body, and hence the origin of the sequence in the order mentioned above.

Think of a wheel. The very centre of the wheel is quite steady, without movement, whereas the circumference of the wheel experiences maximum movement. Similarly, the center of a tornado, the eye, is in utter stillness. If you want to be calm, position yourself in the center of the tornado and keep moving along with it, and then nothing will affect you.

And what is our center, around which the vortex of life exists? It is the soul.

Let's explore the physical end of the spectrum. The five senses are given to us for a noble purpose, but we are so busy using them for our pleasures at the physical level that we misuse them. For example, we have eyes so that we can look around and protect ourselves and see things better; that is their main purpose. But we use the eyes for a different purpose that is desire-based, drawing us outwards, creating a vacillating mind and disturbance. Then we are unable to focus on our center. If we focus on the steadiness of the soul, we will stay centered.

Consider it from another angle: the earth is revolving around the sun while spinning on its own axis at a very high speed. If you are seated at the Equator you will have maximum exposure to that movement at almost 1000 miles per hour,

whereas if you are at the North Pole you will feel as if you are stationary, as you are on the top of the axis. So the key is to find that axis within yourself.

How is this possible? It is possible only when you match your movements with those of your axis. And what are those movements all about? The ability of your mind to settle down.

The great yogi, Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh, said that it is the settledness of the mind on a subject that brings happiness. If that settledness is not there, then you will be jumping from one thing to another without any resolution. You will not have any closure, you will not have any satisfaction, and you will not have any peace. You will still be vacillating and dissatisfied all your life, and you will not have learned anything from all your activities.

So settledness is the key. When you meditate you must feel settled. Or putting it another way: if the meditation is done correctly you will automatically feel settled.

Now settledness does not mean inactivity; in fact it is activity at a dimension we have never conceived of before.

Now settledness does not mean inactivity; in fact it is activity at a dimension we have never conceived of before. When you have a subject to study, a business venture to work upon and a conversation with your child, your mind should be steady on them. At the same time your mind should also be steady on any other thing that you need to attend to. The steadiness should be there. It is not that when you are fully attentive to one thing you are less attentive to another. One does not rob your mind of capacity for the other.

It depends on how you develop your capacity to expand your consciousness. As you progress, you will not feel that you are thinking or contemplating, as it just becomes a part of your nature. It is like developing any other capacity. For example, when little children have to add 2+2 a lot of thinking is involved, but as a teenager you can have a complex equation in your mind and work on it, no longer needing to think. You are able to contemplate. When you advance a little more, you are neither thinking nor contemplating, as the answer comes just like that.

The nature of the soul is movement and thinking, and in the early stages of a spiritual practice, you learn to focus and think clearly. Later on comes expansion, which means you develop 360-degree consciousness. Still later, when you reach higher realms of human consciousness, it is as if you are everywhere at the same time. Consciousness is of a nature where you have gone beyond expansion, and that is why there is stillness, which happens when things are moving extremely fast.

So let's look at it from the perspective of infinite movement versus perfect stillness. What is infinite movement? We can understand this by considering the physics of movement. If you go from Detroit to

New York by car, you will go at a certain speed; let us say you take 8 or 9 hours. If you take a flight, you will arrive there in an hour and fifteen minutes. If you take one of those old supersonic flights, by the time they announce you are taking off you are already landing. If you fly at the speed of tachyon particles¹, you can be in New York and Detroit at the same time. Now why is this relevant to infinite movement?

When we go beyond certain frequencies in Nature, it seems as if there is nothing happening because of the enormity of the speed with which things are moving. You can think of it like a child's spinning top. When it is spinning the fastest, and is perfectly balanced, it looks as if it is not moving at all.

As we move inwards towards our center, something similar happens; we become subtler. As we become subtler and subtler, the frequency within also changes. The transformation follows the progression from matter to energy to Absolute. In such a profound state of being, it appears as if nothing is happening inside. But actually so much is happening at the same time! The 360-degree awareness is so rapid that it is almost real time.

For example, even before another person speaks, you have felt what they are going to say, understood and responded. Nothing is holding your mind, or you can say that your mind is able to settle on everything simultaneously. You can be absolutely settled on your spirituality, and you are also settled on your business decisions without becoming either disturbed or elated about them. There may be a hundred things that you are planning in your life, but if you have the ability to move from one to another at lightning speed, why worry?

¹ Purported to travel faster than the speed of light



The idea of all yogic practices is to make the mind still and steady so that it can resonate with the stillness of the soul. So all our efforts towards the eight steps of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga – *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* – are for the single purpose of creating stillness in the mind.

The outer stillness of the mind is then able to match the inner stillness of the soul. Everything is integrated.

This is the state known as *sahaj samadhi*, and to achieve this state is why we meditate ●

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AN INTEGRATIVE FOUNDATION TO HEALING

- PART 2 -

In part 2 of this interview, LUKE COUTINHO and SAMARA MAHINDRA speak about the role meditation plays in healing, as well as the importance of food and nutrition at the cellular level.



MEDITATION

Q Luke and Samara, welcome back. Your field is Integrative and Lifestyle Medicine. Last time you had started talking about meditation and its role in holistic medicine. Can you elaborate further?

LC I used to be scared of meditation because I had limited knowledge. I believed you had to sit cross-legged and because I cannot sit cross-legged I never wanted to explore it. But then I realized that I can sit, I can stand, I can meditate, I can be talking to you – it is brilliant when you can explore knowledge and discover how easy things can be.

I started off with two minutes of meditation. I never believed I could silence my mind, and today an hour is not enough sometimes. It's an integral part of healing.

I started off with two minutes of meditation. I never believed I could silence my mind, and today an hour is not enough sometimes. It's an integral part of healing.

Q What about you Samara?

SM I think there are a lot of preconceived notions about meditation. I was like Luke, assuming I had to be a certain way, and not have any thoughts, concentrate, etc. It's not like that. I got into meditation a bit later in my life – I was trying to find space, trying to find oneness, trying to calm myself down, but for a while I couldn't find anything. Then the same thing happened, and I found Heartfulness meditation. I remember one of the doctors from the Heartfulness care team said to me, "With this type of meditation there is no anchor. You can go into your heart space anywhere, anytime."

You don't need music, you don't need the voice of another person, you don't need anything else. You can just go into your own space."

So I have started incorporating it into my life and I realize the impact, and there are physiological changes that happen in the body. A lot of people think that it is just in the mind, but there are actual physical changes that take place. So meditation is one element that is very important.

There are also other elements, for example counseling is important. In India it is still in its fledgling stage, as people again have preconceived notions about counseling. Speaking about what you are going through can help emotionally to a great extent, so it is another element of mind therapy that we do bring into healing. Also Yoga therapy is a form of mind-body healing.

Q That's what the word 'Yoga' means, isn't it, the integration of the whole of mind, body and soul. The 35 steps of Yoga cover the evolution of all aspects of the three bodies – physical, mental and the soul.

SM Exactly.

FOOD, CELLS AND IMMUNITY

Q Let's change track and speak about food and India. They go together, as food is such a very important part of life here. And traditionally food is tailored around health – what spices and oils are used, for example, as each one has its purpose in well-being. How do you use this knowledge in your treatment plans for patients?

LC Let's go back to disease. Where does disease originate? I would say in the mind, but that is a whole different discussion; it also originates in each cell. Cancer originates in a cell. Diabetes,

Absorption is a process that is physiological as well as psychosomatic. We all have a second brain called the enteric nervous system, which supports your gut.

insulin insensitivity, is the result of a weak cell. The energy of that cell is imbalanced. Now what provides energy to a cell besides oxygen? A major thing is the food that you eat. So when you give that cell the right energy, it can perform its functions.

We are all made up of billions of cells, all orchestrated into an intelligence, a brilliance, called our immunity. That is what immunity is – every cell is involved. So as we are speaking right now there are hundreds of thousands of cells that are dying and others rapidly multiplying, living, rejuvenating, fighting other cells, and it is all happening right now.

For that they need energy. So when you put the right nutrients into the cell, you create stronger immunity in that cell, and when you put the wrong nutrients into the cell you deplete the immunity. So it all comes down to food. And it is not about what you eat, it is about how your body absorbs it. There are so many people who eat organic food who still have cancer, and there are so many people who are

strict with their diet who are still sick, because it is not about what you are eating but how your body is absorbing it.

Absorption is a process that is physiological as well as psychosomatic. We all have a second brain called the enteric nervous system, which supports your gut. It senses different foods and the absorption of nutrients, etc. So let's come back to Indian spices and foods. There is so much medicine in them: the peppercorn, turmeric, ginger and garlic, just to name a few. But it is easy for me to say, "Start eating them and be healthy," because people are eating them and not getting healthy. They lose faith.

There is something called bio-availability. I can eat a piece of turmeric right now and it should reduce inflammation and pain in my body because it is anti-inflammatory, but it may not work that way. My digestive system needs to break it down and absorb it so that it goes into my cells. And then in the cells there are metabolic, physiological and chemical functions. So it is about far more than eating healthy food.

It is also about eating the right combinations of food. If you are eating turmeric, you also want to eat coconut oil or ghee that is a medium-chain fatty acid and becomes a carrier for the nutrients in turmeric within your cells. You want to add a little bit of black pepper because turmeric is better absorbed into your cells in the presence of piperine, which is found in black pepper. Take garlic also, for example: you can add so much to your cooking but then you will kill it with heat. A better way to eat it is crushed and raw, so the active ingredient allicin is activated and in turn produces other sulphur compounds.

So there is a science behind food. Ayurveda talks about it, the Vedas talk about it, and the West is talking about it today as well. In fact, most of my

Caucasian clients in the West are eating more Indian food than Indians. It's unbelievable!

The magic is that every concoction can be made at home, for example, for your immunity. If you have cancer or a common cold or cough, you can boil cardamom, ginger and black pepper, and then add a little cinnamon and then sweeten it with organic honey or jaggery, and that will take care of your immunity. It is back to the basics of food as medicine, getting the right nutrition. Everything is a combination.

So there is a whole world of supplements today, which the West has really misused by promising people things that don't work. "Have 30 grams of protein a day and you will look like Arnold Schwarzenegger." But the body cannot absorb 30





grams of protein at one time. You are better off spacing that out over a longer period. Similarly, the media tells us, “Take a multivitamin every day, take calcium every day.” India and the US are the highest consumers of calcium and dairy in the world, and they have the highest rates of osteoporosis in the world today!

Supplements can still be good. I use supplements, especially a lot of plant-based formulations, in the treatment of my patients. I wish I didn’t have to, but given the depletion of the soils today, our food is naturally poorer in minerals and nutrients than in times gone by. By the time a plant is then sprayed with chemicals and takes its time to reach your kitchen bench top, you may think you are having a healthy bowl of lettuce but it might be devoid of nutrition.

So you need to find the right plants and herbs in order to make plant-based formulations that can be absorbed. And there is another thing: the equivalent to one capsule of curcumin is twenty-two tablespoons of turmeric, fixed with oil and with black pepper. Is it possible to do all that every day when you are sick? No, you need a tablet that is designed in such a way that your body can absorb all of it.

So you have to use supplements, and India has always used them. We have had Ayurvedic formulations for over 5,000 years. That is how old this system of science is. People have been using these formulations all this time, so there is no reason to be scared of taking natural supplements while you are taking allopathic medicines.

Coming to oils, many of us are slowly poisoning ourselves every day, by eating the wrong oils. Sugar we can do without for a number of days in a row, but oil is needed in our system. Indians had the best kinds of oils in their diet at some point – peanut oil, mustard oil, coconut oil, etc. and there was no chronic disease like there is today. We need to relearn what oils to include in our diets and how to use them.

To be continued ●

INTERVIEWED BY ELIZABETH DENLEY

The energy of that cell is imbalanced. Now what provides energy to a cell besides oxygen? A major thing is the food that you eat. So when you give that cell the right energy, it can perform its functions.



Natural forces within us are the true healers of disease.

HIPPOCRATES

The Soul

IS THE REAL HEALER

SANTA TELLERI shares her experience of the effect a spiritual practice has had on her work as a homeopathic healer.

When I started meditation, all that I had learnt when studying homeopathy became much clearer for me.

Dr Samuel Hahnemann, in his Organon of the Healing Art, says that the purpose of being healthy is that,

“The reasoning spirit which inhabits the organism can thus freely use this healthy living instrument to reach the lofty goal of human existence.”

–Organon, 9

For me, this lofty goal is to merge with the divine Self. In order to fix our higher goal, meditation is one very good way.

Hahnemann also says that,

“Since diseases are some dynamic deviations our spiritual life undergoes in the way it feels and acts, that is due to immaterial changes in our way of being.”

–Organon, Introduction

So, the way I see it, the cause for any disease is ‘wrong thinking’, which generates a ‘wrong feeling’ that will be materially expressed in our physical body in the form of symptoms.

Meditation helps us to regulate our minds and train them to serve the heart, just by being connected with the source of Light within. As a consequence, our vital energy is able to regain its balance more easily.

The complementary process of yogic cleaning frees the soul of heaviness, all the impressions our thoughts and deeds have created in the past. Once we are cleaned of past impressions, we have a clearer vision of Reality.

Thanks to meditation and the rejuvenative process of cleaning, as a therapist I have been able to communicate heart to heart with my patients, and better see what is to be treated. It is no longer a question of removing or suppressing symptoms, as I would rather take into account the person’s whole being: body, mind and soul.

In the light of my spiritual practice, the way I look at others has changed completely. There is no longer any partition between them and me, any partition at the level of our souls, because I realize we are all connected to the same Source. So I now have

a more benevolent, compassionate attitude. I now receive wholeheartedly the suffering the person presents, in order to be relieved.

I am better able to accompany that person in her evolving process, in her becoming aware of the purpose of her life here, so that she may find out what her disease is saying to her from the depth of her being. Then the answer will be found in a single exclusive homeopathic remedy made of substances from plants, animals or minerals (diluted and activated), which will work towards healing the patient in that particular moment.

This work has helped me to realize that the soul within us is the real healer. As therapists, we do our best, wholeheartedly and skillfully, but the result belongs to the divine spark that dwells in every individual’s heart ●



THE BUDDHA PROJECT

The goal of the Buddha Project was to find and photograph some of the most unique and beautiful Buddha statues throughout Asia: those that are unique in color, decay or texture, and have something that set them apart. This 6,000 mile journey led me through six countries, forty-two cities and nineteen caves.

Here are seven of my favorite Buddhas, in the order I photographed them. After arriving in some of these magnificent locations, I just sat and cleared my mind to take it all in ... a sense of real serenity.





BUDDHA COVERED WITH MONKEYS

The setting in Lopburi, Thailand, is what really enticed me to photograph this beautiful Buddha. The monkeys added an extra element.

DATDAWTAUNG CAVE

Just outside Mandalay, Myanmar, this was on the top of my list for statues to photograph: the colors, the lighting, the textures. It is everything all in one. The tranquility this cave resonated was truly remarkable. I joined a group of locals for meditation in the far corner of the cave.



INLE LAKE

The only way to get to this Buddha in Myanmar was by boat, and it was quite difficult. Eventually, I completely stumbled on the statue. No one was in sight; I was alone with the Buddha I had dreamed of photographing for the last ten years. All the hairs on my arms stood up and I began to laugh out of pure joy.



THAM KHAO LUANG CAVE

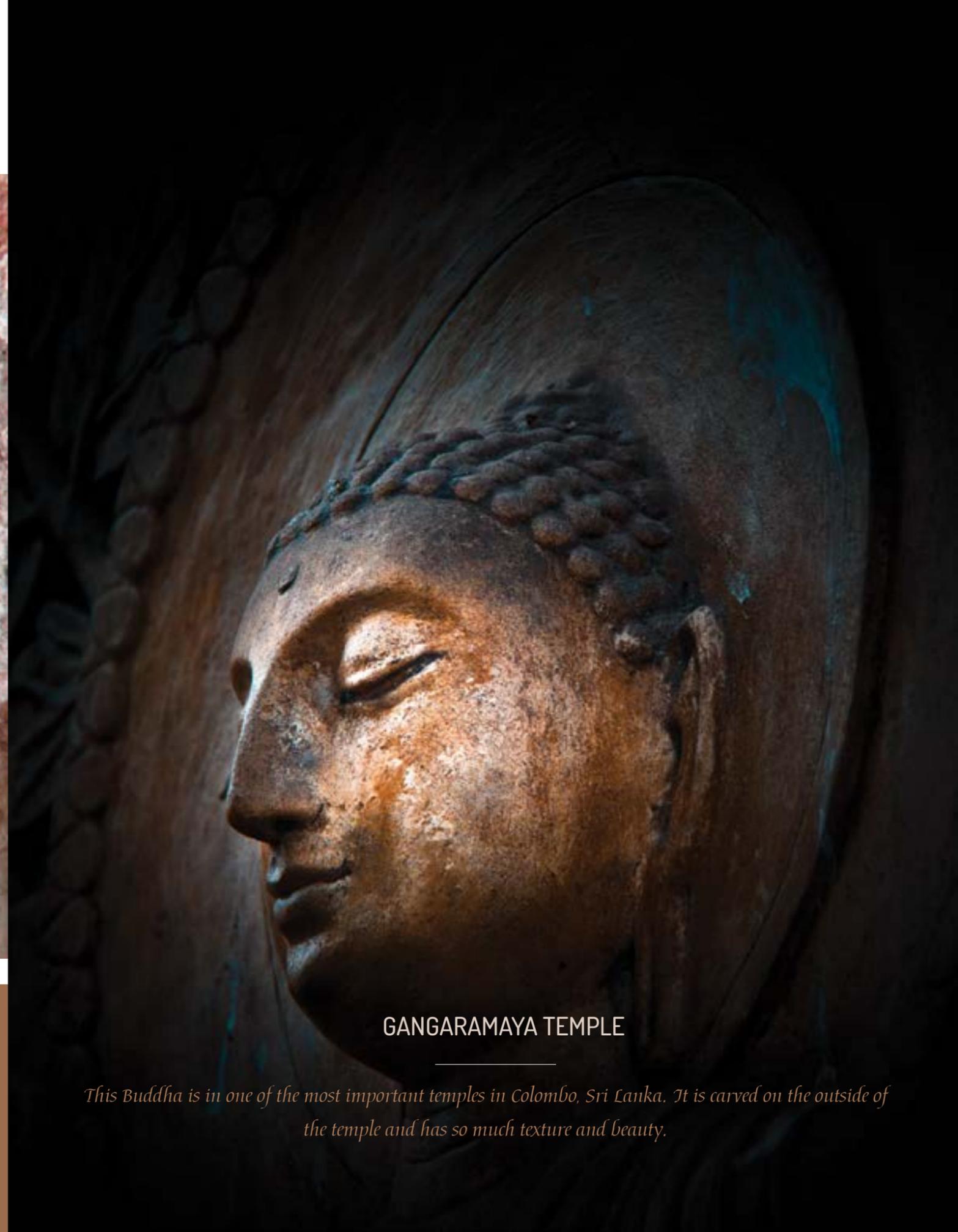
Just a couple of hours outside of Bangkok, Thailand, is a city called Phetchaburi. Tham Khao Luang Cave brought me here, but after exploring I found some statues that were a little off the main path. This is a smaller statue, and the unique colors and texture are what really caught my attention.





VANG XANG CAVE

About an hour outside Vientiane, Laos, was one of the more difficult statues to find, far off the beaten track. This eighth — eleventh century Cambodian-style Buddha represents everything I set out to find, from its unique color, texture and decay. Nine statues in total are carved into these rocks caves. It felt so surreal.



GANGARAMAYA TEMPLE

This Buddha is in one of the most important temples in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It is carved on the outside of the temple and has so much texture and beauty.



GAL VIHARA

*This twelfth century Buddha in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka, is carved out of granite rock.
I had been dreaming of photographing this Buddha for the last decade*

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LEMON MARINATED KALE SALAD

- 6 leaves of lacinato or dino kale
- 1/2 red grapefruit
- 1 lemon, the juice
- 1 small beetroot
- 1/3 red cabbage
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 fresh red chili
- salt and pepper

INGREDIENTS

Wash all vegetables. Thinly slice the green kale and mix in a bowl with the juice from 1 lemon and 4 tbsp oil.

Massage the green kale with your hands for a few minutes, to make it soft. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour or longer - overnight.

In a new mixing bowl add thinly sliced red cabbage and spiral sliced (or grated) beetroot then marinate it with lemon and olive oil for 1 hour or overnight.

Before serving, slice the red grapefruit and cut off the peel. Cut the slices into triangles and mix it with the green kale. Add the finely sliced chili, salt, pepper and more extra virgin olive oil.

PS refrigerating overnight makes the kale really delicious.



PUMPKIN BREAD WITH CHIA & HERBS

- 50g chia seeds
- 1 cup water
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil or flaxseed oil
- 1 small pumpkin
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp herbs - as basil, thyme, rosemary, sage
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup spelt or gluten free flour
- 1/2 cup almond meal (blend the almonds)
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground white pepper
- 1 lemon, the zest
- 1 tsp Himalayan salt

INGREDIENTS



PS use the lemon peel from the kale recipe but grate first.

Start the oven at 175 C / 356 F

Mix chia seeds in a big bowl with 1/2 cup water, stir often for about 15 minutes. In the meantime, blend the almonds to a fine meal. Cut the pumpkin in pieces and blend it with some water to a puree.

To chia mix add pumpkin puree, lemon zest and oil and stir. Then add baking soda and the spices and stir again. Add the oats, almond meal, flour and water and whisk together. Scoop into loaf pan oiled or with baking paper. Make some patterns on top and bake for 90 minutes.

The bread will sound hollow, like striking with your fingers on a drum, when it's done. Leave the bread for some hours before cutting it ●



HEALS, CURES, REJUVENATES
Treading the Path of Ayurveda



© John Singleton | Courtesy of Green School Bali

GREEN SCHOOL: AN INSPIRING SOURCE

VERONIQUE DESVIGNE has a passion for education and teaching. So she went with her family to one of the most inspiring schools on the planet, near Ubud on the island of Bali.

One evening in December 2008, while living in Seoul and being tired of the mass media that only speaks about the economic crisis and world degradation, my husband Alain saw a TED talk, and there we were! John Hardy resonated with him. The school's founder and his wife Cynthia had envisioned creating an environment in which students are enabled and inspired to be creative, innovative and tomorrow's 'green leaders'. This is how the Green School project was born.

Alain works in the field of renewable energy while I am involved in Montessori education. Eager to pass on to our children a 'vision of a colorful world', we looked forward to visiting this Green School. In July 2016 this dream came true.

It is nestled in a green landscape on the island of Bali near Ubud, between the rice paddy fields and the Ayung river. After walking across a suspension bridge with such elegant curves that it seemed to fly, an architecture of outstanding beauty came

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Courtesy of PT. Bamboo Pure



into sight. The focus of the campus is called the heart of the school. It is made of a natural resource that is a giant grass, is both local and renewable, grows to a height of a coconut tree within two months and is harvested three years later. Yes, bamboo!

Green School aims to have the lowest carbon footprint possible, and to be the first model of a sustainable economy in the educational field. Meshing with the surrounding ecosystem, the campus blends into nature and strives to set the bar high by hoping to induce many schools in its wake.

The bamboo columns set a framework for classes without walls.

It is an ideal space to learn to think differently and without limits. Each class cultivates its own organic garden supplying the school canteen. Children in permanent contact with nature interact with the natural environment, and we observe the direct impact on their behavior. A symbiotic relationship is then created and a respectful attitude towards the world that surrounds them becomes obvious. The students are encouraged to be responsible from an early age to take care of the environment and play while devising environmental solutions.

A SUSTAINABLE AND HOLISTIC EDUCATION

At Green School, desks are not aligned in squares or positioned in the same direction. Time schedules are flexible to leave room for creativity and more fluidity.

Green School offers a 'hands-on' and 'learn by doing' approach to education, stimulating students to be conscious and discerning. By living with nature and observing its rhythms, students develop a satisfaction to learn that goes well beyond the class, resulting in creative, innovative and critical thinkers, who are confident and capable of developing a long-term vision.

The curriculum covers three topics: classical subjects, such as maths, English and science, green studies and the arts.

These are all influenced by geographical and cultural fields. It offers a balanced approach to

inspire young children to learn, and equips them with the appropriate and relevant tools to nurture their passion, preserving our planet at the same time.

By studying rice, for example, children learn to have a global vision of the development of the seeds they plant. They also learn to appreciate the need for healthy nutrition while cooking the crops they have grown and serving them for meals. Habits change naturally when being conscious that our blue planet is not indestructible.

Climate change and sustainable economy are essential subjects, which enrich the programs for older students. Applied physics is encouraged during engineering projects such as a bridge construction. Focusing on the natural environment, the students explore this project from A to Z and highlight all the physical elements and forces to be studied. Students are given the space and time to create a dynamic and interactive project,



where everyone's enriched contribution boosts confidence and stimulates entrepreneurial spirit.

CHILDREN: AGENTS OF CHANGE

There are more than forty nationalities and all different ages, so the students practice human values such as mutual respect, tolerance and kindness. Such assets will allow the future agents of change to learn to live in harmony.

The diversity doesn't stop at students: the Green School's faculty members and volunteers also come from around the world, standing strong behind the school's vision: a community of learners making our world sustainable.

Students are encouraged to take initiative from

a very young age, as a part of the school's commitment to create a new generation of green leaders. They are able to create tangible change. 'Bye Bye Plastic Bags' is one initiative of two students who were inspired by one of their teachers.

With millions of visitors, 680 m³ of plastic rubbish had been accumulating on Bali every day. Four years ago, two sisters, Melati and Isabel, saw this situation as alarming and decided to act. Helped by their friends, they campaigned to stop the use of plastic bags with a petition and organizing beach clean-ups regularly. They caught the attention of the Bali governor and convinced him to join their cause, with a positive result: he pledged to clear the island of plastic bags by 2018. Three years after they started, aged 14 and 12 respectively, Melati



Students are encouraged to take initiative from a very young age, as a part of the school's commitment to create a new generation of green leaders.

and Isabel delivered a moving TED talk, sharing their experience, with the hope that their action would inspire many other youngsters: "Though young people represent only 25% of the world population, they represent 100% of the future." They also made it clear to their peers that it is not necessary to be an adult to create the change. "We are not telling you it will be easy but this is worth the trouble."

Many other projects are carried out at the school that embody and respect environmental principles, for example:

Students participate in the reduction of CO₂ emissions and waste management.

Through their Bio Bus initiative, they transform

The exceptional combination of learning environment and educational approach has an enormous impact on the learning process. By encouraging students to wonder at life's possibilities, Green School stimulates the development of a spiritual, emotional and intuitive conscience.

were made from recycled plastics. Filled with their love for nature and passion to make things move, Green School students realized they could get a message across to the world and so make a difference. The success of the show culminated with a performance at the COP21 sustainable innovation forum in Paris!

The exceptional combination of learning environment and educational approach has an enormous impact on the learning process. By encouraging students to wonder at life's possibilities, Green School stimulates the development of a spiritual, emotional and intuitive conscience. Strong emphasis on community creates a living example of what we can do when we decide to put our talents to the service of the heart, thus changing habits and mentalities to prepare the generation of green entrepreneurs.

The impression we had at the end of our visit to Green School is one that has been summarized by the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki Moon: "I visited several different places and a lot of schools, but Green School is the most unique and impressive I ever visited." ●

used cooking oil collected from restaurants and hotels around the island into 100% biodiesel that fuels their school bus.

Presenting environmental issues through the performing arts, they performed a musical entitled 'Noble Material' as one of their efforts to deliver a message on waste management issues, particularly plastic, and how plastics end up in the ocean and on beaches. With the help of enthusiastic parents and teachers, costumes for the musical show

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VERONIQUE DESVIGNE & GREEN SCHOOL



Every natural object is a conductor of divinity.

JOHN MUIR

Garden GLOVES

ALANDA GREENE explores the idea of openness and protectiveness against stimuli by a comparison with wearing garden gloves while working in her beloved garden in British Columbia.

My relationship with garden gloves continues to consist of two opposing drives – the need to wear them to protect my hands, and the need for my skin to feel the plants without a barrier as I engage in garden tasks. Each drive excludes something. In one case, the sensitivity of touch is dulled. In the other, protection of my hands from abrasion, cuts, punctures, dirt and stains is given up.

I see a similar paradox between openness and protectiveness in the experiences of daily living.

Most of the time I wear gloves while working in the garden. Otherwise, my hands are stained with plant juices and my skin is embedded with dirt, as well as marked with cuts and scrapes. Although I scrub and lather at the sink, clean hands are difficult to retrieve. Too many times have I looked down at my fingers while passing a receipt to someone, or playing my guitar in public, to discover with mild horror that my fingers and nails are not clean after all, but embedded with dark brown plant dye that looks like dirt.

I need a more sensitive touch than gloves can give, to clear this uninvited growth and not disturb the tiny seedlings that I wish to remain and thrive.

... I see a similar paradox between openness and protectiveness in the experiences of daily living.



Gloves are not my preference, especially when removing weeds. If not removed early, these weeds will surge ahead of tiny, slow-growing carrots and crowd them out entirely. I need a more sensitive touch than gloves can give, to clear this uninvited growth and not disturb the tiny seedlings that I wish to remain and thrive.

Sometimes, I also just enjoy feeling plants. My sense of touch is dulled by a thick layer of glove. Touching the plants directly slows my work; I attend more carefully and work more precisely.

Transplanting tomato seedlings, I feel the fine furry texture of their stems. The impossible delicateness of celery brings protective and gentle caution, my awe renewed as I wonder, “How can these tiny plants become so strong?” Celery seeds are so small, as are their emerging leaves, their stems more like thin threads than stalks – yet look what they become.

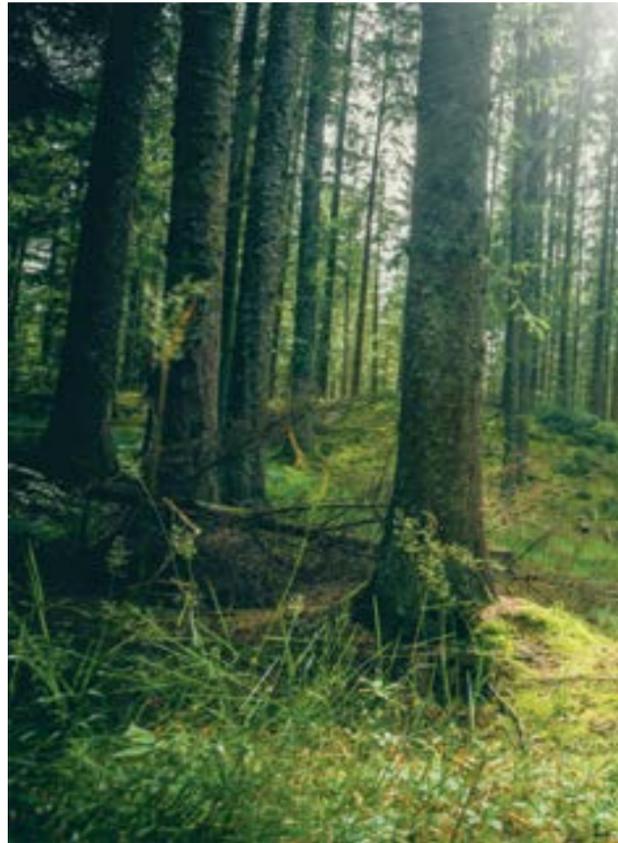
I feel encouraged with the potential of my life, any life, to evolve beyond what is currently evident, in

the same way that these celery beginnings give no hint of how they will stand lush and strong in a couple of months. That will happen, however, if they are not crowded by aggressive weeds. And those weeds need a careful touch to be removed without harm to the celery.

I keep my gloves on when cutting back the thorny stems of roses, the sharp edges of irises that can slice an exposed finger like a knife, or when pulling larger weeds like burdock and dandelion that require a better grip. Also, when I want to keep my hands clean.

I have been transplanting this morning with bare fingers, delighting in the process and seeing a connection between other sensory perceptions and that of touch.

I recognize that much of what I perceive or interact with in daily life can be like wearing gloves. In the same way that I do not feel sensations on my skin with gloves, my other senses at times do not perceive more delicate input.



When sounds are harsh and loud it is difficult to perceive more refined impressions, or even be sensitive to perceiving my own thoughts and interior feelings. The onslaught of noise that I experience when visiting the city leaves me rattled: stores that play loud music, trucks and cars filling road space with roars, and quiet environments hard to find. Friends who live in the city do not display the distress I feel. In the same way I protect my hands with gloves from thorns and thick stalks, I feel the need to protect my ears. I find myself wearing mental garden gloves, tuning out the noise volume. I notice other people adopting a similar process as a necessary shield. But I wonder if this ‘tuning out’ of the excess is actually conscious? Has it just become a habit?

When teaching, once a week I would take my class on a walk through the woods to a friend’s

land where we did a variety of exercises in this outdoor classroom. At the beginning of the year, the students each chose a place on the forested hillside that was a minimum distance from any other person. This was their space for the year to write, listen, watch and reflect without any outer conversation. We concluded these visits by sitting in a circle and reading from journals about what was learned, observed, heard. I remember vividly one loudly talkative young woman who told us with clear excitement: “I think this is the first time in my life I’ve ever been quiet. I could hear my own thoughts. This is amazing.”

It’s like she took off the hearing gloves and noticed something new. I realized that I can and do have ‘attention gloves’ that limit my perception as surely as this young woman’s appreciation for hearing had been limited.

How often am I busy doing this and that – arranging mulch, pulling grass, pinching back basil – and not noticing anything about what I am touching, with or without gloves? My attention is elsewhere, on what needs to be done, planning lunch, a conversation from the day before. If a thorn pokes me, I notice. Am I giving myself a subtle message that I will pay attention only when it is extreme or when it hurts?

Am I wearing metaphorical garden gloves that are a barrier to refined sensations, because of a habitual lack of attending to the delicate and refined? When sounds are loud and constant, when other sensory stimuli are intense and lacking refinement, are these endured by moving attention away, in order not to be overwhelmed? Yes, and I need that protection in certain circumstances or I will indeed be overwhelmed. But too often, I tune out from habit and lack of awareness; it is not conscious, it is not a protective choice.

How often when eating a meal do I miss the taste and texture of what is in my mouth? When I take time to chew, to notice, to absorb, tastes emerge that are unexpected, new, subtle. I create receptivity for perceiving, and after a time, begin to notice what was previously not there.

If I don’t ‘take off the gloves’ to attune to even more refined vibrations, I am missing a whole other world of being. In meditation, where sensory input is minimized and where thought patterns gradually become quiet, subtle perceptions are recognized. It is just like taking time to remove my garden gloves to feel the fine velvety surface of a sunflower petal. I have to remove them to even know that exquisite texture exists.

Our culture tends to excess of sensory experiences. Often I need to protect myself against such excesses as surely as I need protective gloves in the garden for some activities. Just as surely, I need

time every day to consciously attune to more subtle impressions, where I remove the protective shield. Creating time and space to regularly practice builds remembrance through experience of more delicate sensations and information. I then can choose when to be open and when to protect. In the garden, I can wear gloves when needed, appreciate the subtle touch of various plants without gloves, and still have clean hands for another task.

In daily life, where ‘attention gloves’ can be removed very quickly, I can choose to tune in whenever the possibility presents itself, keeping this awareness alive through regular practice ●

If I don’t ‘take off the gloves’ to attune to even more refined vibrations, I am missing a whole other world of being. In meditation, where sensory input is minimized and where thought patterns gradually become quiet, subtle perceptions are recognized.



PAINTING STONES

Next time you are on the beach, in the forest, or by a river, choose some stones to collect to paint with your friends or family. Make sure you check that they are not stones with moss, lichen or other living things growing on them, as that will disturb the local ecology.

TEXT:
ANNE-GRETHE KOUSGAARD

While having each stone in your hand, you can ask yourself:

- What kind of stone have I found?
- What kind of pattern would be nice on the stone?
- Are there some marks on the stone that call for a theme?

Acrylic colours are more permanent than watercolours and Uni-Posca paint marker pens make fine lines very easily.

Enjoy and have fun!





THE RAINBOW CHILDREN

Did you know that on special days there are people from the rainbow visiting our planet earth? This is a very great secret and not many of us know about it. It also needs a very special light in the atmosphere to see them.

It so happened that a wise old man was once visited by these rainbow people and he told me about it. They were small children of many different skin colors, and each one was dressed in a garment of one color of the rainbow, very beautiful.

When they arrived on earth, they were so happy to find the colors of the rainbow here too.

There was purple, like the shade color under big trees and the purple in the deep velvety eyes of the gentle cows.

There was red, like the fire shooting out of the volcanoes and also the fine blood in the veins of our body, nourishing the heart.

There was blue, like the color in the dancing rivers, and blue in the sky far over the mountains.

There was green, the lovely green in all our plants and leaves, helping to grow the fruits and harvest.

There was orange, like the color of the earth in warm countries and the color of so many juicy fruits to eat.

And there was yellow, the holy yellow of the sunshine and also of wheat and corn.

The children went here and there and wanted to know all things about this planet. They saw the plants, the trees, the animals and all the beauty here on earth.





All the while they heard the fine silvery sound of a flute, but they did not know from where it came. The music touched their hearts.

They had come to ask the wise old man a question, so they prepared lovely garlands of flowers to bring to him as a greeting. They found the old man behind tall trees, putting a garland on a gentle white cow. He received the children lovingly. Again the fine silvery tune was heard.



Little Green asked first: “We heard on the rainbow about a special seed here on earth. Do you know anything about that?”

Then little Blue continued: “We were told by our Elders, to know about it would be important for the whole universe.”

Now little Orange came in front: “Yes, and out of this special seed a very beautiful flower emerges, they said.”

Then little Red bowed deeply before the old man: They said that if one could attain that flower, one could find one’s way to heaven.

Little Purple continued: “We heard that whoever finds the flower will also be a loving person.”

Little Yellow ended the questions: “Therefore, O wise man, we were asked to look for the seed.”

The old man nodded lovingly: “Yes, my children, all this is true, but everybody has to find it for themselves. Otherwise it remains hiding. The only guidance I can give you is to ask your heart for every step of your search.”

The children thanked the wise old man and went on with their search.

On their way they came to the mighty blue ocean. There they met the dolphins, the graceful dancers of the deep waters. The children accepted their invitation to dive deep into the beauty under water. There they saw so many magnificent flowers and creatures of many forms. But they could find nobody who knew about the special seed or the flower that could grow from it.

Though it was a fantastic world down there, coming from the lofty rainbow, they missed the sunlight after a while and returned to the surface of the earth.



There they saw a mighty elephant majestically walking towards a jungle. On it sat a fine figure in blue and gold playing a flute. Finally they could hear the silvery tune again and they just followed the big animal into the jungle

To be continued ●

WORDS & COLLAGES BY BRIGITTE SMITH



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Monday, 16 January 2017

7:00 pm IST (India), 2:30 pm CET (Europe), 8:30 am EST (USA)

Register at <https://goo.gl/VbRwQn>

Liz Kingsnorth is a Heartfulness certified trainer and founding director of a training and organizational consultancy and is a certified international trainer in Nonviolent Communication (NVC). In the past, Liz has enjoyed working as a teacher, counselor, SHEN therapist and dream therapist.

OVERVIEW & KEY TAKEAWAYS:

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Saturday, 14 January 2017

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Prakash Seshadri is the CEO & co-founder of SEE CHANGE CONSULTING and SEE CHANGE ACADEMY, Chennai, India. He has authored several books, and as a motivational speaker, a corporate mentor and an organizational Change Management Consultant, he works across India. He has practiced Heartfulness meditation since 1992.

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More details about the time and registration will follow soon.

Dr Adizes is one of the world's leading management consultants and a recipient of eighteen honorary doctorate degrees. He created a legendary methodology that bears his name and he is the author of 26 books.

You will learn that you don't need to panic if you experience conflict in your relationship. Conflict is inevitable, and you will learn how to use it to build a happy marriage or any kind of relationship.

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