

MEDITATION

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**POWERFUL
MEDITATIONS
TO BRIGHTEN
YOUR LIFE**

#5 WILL BLOW YOUR MIND

**CAN MEDITATION
HELP YOU BEAT
THE FLU?**

TWO RECENT
STUDIES MAY
SURPRISE YOU!

REMEMBERING
RAM DASS
THE PSYCHEDELIC GURU

5 TIPS

TO **SURVIVE**
THE **CORONA-
POCALYPSE**
WITH **PEACE,
JOY & LOVE**
INSTEAD OF
DEPRESSION
& ANXIETY

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH...

Yoga Girl®

RACHEL BRATHEN

@meditationmag



2020 - 2021 | APOCALYPSE ISSUE



“SELF LOVE IS A JOURNEY THAT
DOESN'T HAVE A DESTINATION”

LOVE BROWNE

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY: KEVIN ELLERTON, FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As I write these words, cool wet tears are drying in the creases beneath my eyes.

My wife, Jovanna, lies in a hospital bed, with a mask on her face and a child in her womb, and the ER won't even let me sit in the waiting room. Because, you know, pandemic.

I was numb to it all, for so long.

When I pulled into our driveway a few hours ago and stepped out into the rain, I couldn't even feel what I was feeling. I've been walking around in a haze. I want to be there for her, but I can't. I don't know what to do with myself. And of course, none of this is happening in a vacuum.

My brain has been burned out for six months. I've been trying to figure out how to publish a magazine in a pandemic without going bankrupt. Did you know magazine sales are down 40%-50% across the US and Canada? People aren't going to bookstores. Shocking, I know. Well, as a small publisher, that means our economy of scale is out the window. If you're reading these words in a printed magazine, it means we decided to move forward with the print, and probably lost a buttload of money on this issue. Worse yet, bookstores & grocery stores decide how many copies to order in the future based on how well the last issue sold.

I worry that by publishing this issue in the middle of a pandemic, we may be shooting ourselves in the foot. I've personally been struggling with this decision for several months, as I know many small business owners are struggling with their own difficult decisions. The coronapocalypse takes its toll on

everyone. But today was the first time I set foot in a hospital.

Jovanna and I have been trying to start a family for over a year now. We were starting to question whether our bodies were working correctly. We were so excited to see that faint pink line a few short weeks ago... but the dream turned into a nightmare over the past few days. Nausea and occasional vomiting are normal in the first trimester. Ten times per day will land you in the ER with an IV in your arm.

I'm well aware that we're among the lucky ones. And trust me, I'm not complaining. I have friends and colleagues here in New York who have had (and currently have) Covid19. One friend in his twenties who's been struggling to breathe for over a month now. I know people who have lost loved ones. I can hardly imagine what they're going through. All I know is: the tears rolling down my cheeks right now are better than the dry, desensitized numb that I was feeling a few minutes ago.

So, what finally released the waterworks? Was it being told I couldn't take care of and comfort my wife in the hospital? No. I walked out of the hospital numb. I drove home numb. I pulled into the driveway numb. I walked through the rain, and moved around the house, in a cold gray fog. I sat at the table and read an article in the Wall Street Journal. I brushed off loved ones who came by to offer comfort.

I knew that wallowing in the fog was not going to improve the situation. I have deadlines for the magazine. I need to coordinate with our art director, our printer, our distributors. Like, yesterday. Like, three months ago. I might as



well take this time to work, right? But why can't I get my head in the game? Deep down, I knew the answer. The clouds in my head were a thunderstorm waiting to happen. A long-term burnout front was colliding with an emergency illness system, and lightning was starting to light up the clouds.

My nervous system was sizzling with crisscrossing signals, so intensely that my conscious mind couldn't even engage. All this unconscious neural-electrical activity was frying my nervous system and burning out my brain. If I'd allowed this situation to progress any further, I probably would have started exploding at anyone who intruded on my misery.

Lucky for me, I haven't missed a day of meditation since 2016. While the storm clouds beckoned me toward misery, numbness, rage and oblivion, the meditation habit was strong enough to get me to sit down. It was a guided breathwork meditation MP3 I'd recorded a few weeks ago. I followed the first few rounds of breathing by force of habit, but my mind was in the hospital. And at the printer's. And in the magazine racks of Barnes & Noble, Chapters/Indigo, Whole Foods. And in two alternate futures: one where Meditation Magazine printed an Apocalypse Issue, and one where it didn't. Halfway through, I noticed that I was barely aware of the breathing exercise. I was missing crucial pieces of the meditation. Stop, rewind — start the MP3 again. This time, I'll be focused.

Within minutes of focusing fully on the breathing exercise, I found myself shaking, sobbing, with tears running down my face. All the emotions had bubbled up from under the surface and were

flowing out my eye-holes. The rain cleared away the clouds, and the sunlight began to illuminate the clear blue sky. The air flowing in through my nostrils was cool and crisp and refreshing, drawing life back into my body, mind and soul. Catharsis. It never gets old.

Now, while some people swear that energy transfers through some kind of spooky action at a distance, I don't believe that that this cathartic spiritual experience is helping Jovanna in her hospital bed, nor do I think that it's helping all those people who are suffering from Covid, and the illness and tragedy it leaves in its wake. But it does put me in a much better position to help them in the future.

The next time I see Jovanna, I'll have the emotional energy to take care of her, to hold space for her, and hopefully help her get through the next few months without too much pain.

And, more relevant for you, dear reader, this beautiful moment reminded me of the reason I founded Meditation Magazine in the first place: to help the world awaken out of depression, anxiety, and suffering, into the blinding light, the bliss & ecstasy of the Oneness of The Universe, Reality, and Existence Itself.

And as I sit here, writing these words, listening to the euphoric melody of Blinding Lights by The Weeknd, I know that, economically intelligent or not, we will publish this issue and distribute it as widely as we possibly can. We'll deal with the economic consequences later. For now, the world needs meditation more than ever. We have one job. And with Existence as my witness, we will do it.

Kevin Ellerton on Lake Phewa, Nepal. Photo by Jovanna Benavente. 2017

THE EASIEST WAY TO GET INTO THE MEDITATIVE STATE IS TO BEGIN BY LISTENING

You simply close your eyes and allow yourself to hear all the sounds that are going on around you... just listen to the general hum and buzz of the world as if you were listening to music.

As you hear sounds coming up in your head - thoughts - you simply listen to them as part of the general noise going on.

So look at your own thoughts as just noises, and soon you will find that the so-called outside world and the so-called inside world come together. They are a happening. Your thoughts are a happening just like the sounds going on outside, and everything is simply a happening, and all you are doing is watching it.

- ALAN WATTS, THE ART OF MEDITATION

This is a meditation you can practice any time, any where.

Whether you're sitting on a quiet mountaintop or in a crowded subway car, Whether you're walking through a forest or a corporate office, Simply return to the experience of sound.

Hear the sounds, without judging them, without preferring one type of sound over another, letting them blend together, the symphony of Existence.

Try it now! Shhh. Just listen.

A full-page photograph of two women, the Chin Twins, performing a synchronized dance move. They are standing on a rocky shore next to a calm lake. Both women are wearing black leotards with a vibrant floral pattern in shades of pink, purple, and green. They are in a dynamic pose, leaning forward with their arms extended and one leg kicked high and back. The background features a dense forest of green trees along the far shore, with rolling hills visible in the distance under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The water in the lake is still, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape.

ELEMENTS OF TIME

CHIN TWINS



We create peaceful moments filled with fantasy for our Instagram account @chintwins. We are wives, mothers and teachers, we are raising families and running our own business. We choose to fill our feed with these captured moments of unity and grace because life has enough chaos and stress. We want our platform to be an oasis of calm, a reminder that love rests and resides right under the surface of each of our busy lives. Growing up as twins we always understood the importance of connection and the strength of being one part of a whole in a society that focuses on the individual. One comment that I never understood was when someone would say to me “I can’t imagine if I had a twin, this world couldn’t handle more than one me”. Maybe the universe knows what people can handle or maybe it knows who needs a soul mate and a mirror to grow up with.

We are each vessels belonging to heaven and to earth. We only contain these emotions, energy, passion and love. If we can each just step away from our powerful minds and longing hearts we will see that we are just tiny threads that can unite with each other to weave this beautiful universe. If we surrender to what is in this moment through meditation, we can become a beautiful masterpiece that will complete someone else’s puzzle.

Credits:
Cristen Barker &
Kimberly Hise: @ChinTwins
thechintwins.com
Photography by Nigel Barker
Clothing by Cynthia Rowley

Meditation and mindfulness are a big part of our lives but may look different each day, looking inward is such a personal practice and is unique to each one of us. I don’t think mindfulness can be bought or sold, the more labels we put on meditation the more complicated it will be for people to access it. We don’t need to go to Bali or own the best meditation pillow to experience enlightenment, we simply need to make a commitment to find stillness and then show up and be willing to wait and listen. As busy mothers there have been some days that meditation has been taking a longer shower or closing our eyes and connecting to our breath while going through the car wash, if you haven’t tried that one I highly recommend it. We all need to carve out time, even if you can’t make it to a yoga class you can still be mindful as you sweep the floor or fold your laundry. We rarely have an aha moment while being fabulous, it’s usually finding joy in the simple moments of life that we also find clarity.

Self-care has become a bit of a cliché lately, but just imagine how different our world would be if we each loved ourselves enough to really learn what triggers us, or how much sleep or time off we really need to function. We need to feed our souls and spirits as much as we need to fuel our bodies, but most of us just push through life trying to control and take care of everyone else except ourselves. Meditation can show us that all of the seeking and searching is unnecessary and that enlightenment is really just getting out of our own way and being that true light that is already inside of us.

One of my favorite meditation quotes is by Deepak Chopra; “Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It is a way of entering the quiet that is already there.” We all walk through the same basic elements and we all have those same elements within us, here is a meditation to guide you back to the stillness that is already waiting for you.

- CHIN TWINS



EARTH:

Allow your physical body to feel heavy, acknowledge and feel any sensations or discomfort.

Surrender and accept the cycles of life and death all around you and know that nothing is permanent.

Realize that you are not this body.

WATER:

Be a witness to your emotions as they run through you like a river, feel the currents of movement these feelings create in your mind.

Visualize all of the tears that you have ever shed and how they purified you.

Discover that you are not your emotions.

WIND:

Focus on the energy that flows through you and feel your breath that rises and falls.

Feel the life force within you and find its source in your center.

Know that this vitality comes from the universe.

FIRE:

Listen to the rhythm of your beating heart, feel the heat that it spreads through you.

See all of your achievements and the passion that has gotten you this far.

Recognize that you are holding this immense love that beats within you.

A photograph of two young women sitting in a meditative lotus position on green-cushioned lounge chairs in a grassy garden. They are surrounded by lush green trees and foliage. The woman on the left is wearing a grey and white long-sleeved shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a light blue crop top and jeans. Both have their eyes closed and hands resting on their knees in a mudra.

OUR KIDS ARE ALRIGHT:

HOW MINDFULNESS IS TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN AND TEENS

BY TY WENZEL

Way back in 1890, at Harvard University, William James wrote in his famous work, *The Principles of Psychology*: “The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. No one is compos sui (master of one’s self) if he have it not. An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.”

James was writing about the systematic refinement of mindfulness

(before mindfulness was “a thing” in western society) and recommending it as an essential part of the education system.

Organized mindfulness is not a new idea in the West, practiced en masse in certain communities since the 1970s, but until the mid-1990s it was deemed “new age” or “fringe.” Scientific research is the primary motor that has driven the widespread practice of mindfulness into an accepted practice by 200-500 million people around the world.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CHILDREN & TEENS

In the introduction to Jon Kabat-Zinn’s book “*The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students*,” Daniel Rechtschaffen notes that “studies in the last twenty years suggest the dramatic decline in children in many of the cognitive and emotional competencies that we take for granted as the foundation for eventually becoming fully embodied adults and contributors to society. ... All of these can

be improved through a mindfulness practice.”

The National Institute of Mental Health reports, “Approximately one in every four to five youth in the U.S. meets criteria for a mental disorder with severe impairment across their lifetime” (Merikangas et al, 2010). The rates of severe psychological disorders have spiked at younger and younger ages – and the trends are moving in an unsettling direction, writes Rechtschaffen.

More than 264 million people

of all ages suffer from depression around the world. There is a direct causality between depression and suicide; it is the second leading killer of young people aged 15-24. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students in the United States. Let that sink in.

Right after my son finished middle-school, there were rampant reports of suicides among the young people in my community. We live in

the tony Hamptons on the eastern tip of Long Island. It seemed so alien to me that our privileged youth could feel so lost that they were literally ending their lives. Suicide does not discriminate. It doesn’t care what your tax bracket is or if you live in a waterfront mansion. I was afraid to send him to our local high school because of rumors that involved at least three suicides with physical bullying involved, two for cyber-bullying, and one that revolved around a boy being outed as gay. And then there was one child

whose mother is a friend of mine. That pushed me over the edge. I felt I needed to do something.

I cashed out my 401-K and built DreamyKid, the first meditation app for kids, in 2015. As a self-taught tech guru, it made sense to me to get this ancient yet progressive methodology into the hands of kids as they experienced life's ups and downs. Tech is their world, and I surmised that their smartphones can be a force for good. If we can avert a tragedy, that's all that matters. Through many years of practice, meditation has taught me that there is no way to shelve the past.

HOW MINDFULNESS IS HELPING

A middle school in a violent neighborhood of San Francisco implemented a group meditation program called 'Quiet Time.' In just thirty days, the kids' behavior improved dramatically. Two years later they reported a 98% attendance rate with the highest happiness levels in a statewide school survey.

Many programs and studies have focused on mindfulness-based approaches for children and teens over the past couple of decades. MBCT for depressive relapse prevention with adolescents (Allen 2006), pilot projects at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, Mindful Awareness Research Center, University of California Los Angeles (MARC, UCLA), InnerKids Foundation, and the work of a practitioner's guide focusing on treatment of children and adolescents (Greco and Hayes 2008) have all shown great promise. There are also reports (Garrison Institute Report 2005, etc.) and media coverage that highlight the growing interest (Brown 2007; Mahr 2007; Suttie 2007, etc.) - there is no stopping mindfulness as a tool to combat children's mental health issues in various forms.

At DreamyKid, we started looking at how to integrate mindfulness into schools, because it was clear that the earlier we started helping children begin their practice, the more we could divert a mental health crisis later on. The Covid-19 pandemic has only amplified the need for mindfulness. DreamyKid saw a 45% increase in subscribership in April and May of 2020. We began offering DreamyKid to teachers for free in 2015 as part of our core mission: mindfulness needs to be federally integrated into every accredited educational curriculum, from Pre-K through university.

BY TY WENZEL

IN 2012 ONLY .06% OF 73.7
MILLION AMERICAN CHILDREN
MEDITATED WEEKLY.
BY 2017 THAT NUMBER
BALLOONED TO 5.4% OF 74.1
MILLION CHILDREN.

This number will grow exponentially, as millennial meditators are now becoming parents. Mindfulness is not just a lifestyle, it's an essential tool that also improves the quality of life for humans, most notably kids. For the sake of our children, we are grateful for that.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU
KNOW IS CONSIDERING
SUICIDE, CALL THE NATIONAL
SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
24/7 AT 800-273-8255.



Ty Wenzel is a published author, award-winning designer and the co-founder of DreamyKid, the first meditation app just for kids. Learn more at www.dreamykid.com



a conversation with

JAH9



YOUR COMBINING OF REGGAE AND YOGA IS VERY UNIQUE; IT SURPRISED ME THAT THERE AREN'T MORE PEOPLE WHO WERE COMBINING REGGAE WITH YOGA.

Maybe in North America, the people that listen to Reggae also practice yoga. But in my world, where Reggae is more associated with Rastafarians, spiritual, cultural, afro-centric... It took us a while to break into certain parts of the subculture. Everything that was not Eurocentric Christianity was considered demonic. We have made great strides in Jamaica. We have been working hard, spreading the message, teaching teachers, building the communities. Everybody is getting into the idea that this is not a negative thing, this is actually a very positive, transformative thing.

There was a slave bible, specifically given to slaves that did not include any of the liberating or “fight for your rights” stories from the Bible. The story of Moses... that was not included in the slave bible. They did not want the slaves to be introduced to any ideas that would encourage them to pursue freedom. So the same reason why they don’t want

us doing yoga, or smoking ganja... anything that is going to give you access to more of yourself.

I READ THAT YOU DON'T SMOKE [GANJA], YOU STEAM IT. I'M FASCINATED BY THAT; COULD YOU EXPLAIN THE PROCESS?

When you steam, you use coconut shells as coal. It’s clean, there are no negative side effects, and we use that as our source of heat. The herb isn’t burning, so there is no smoke, no carcinogenic residue, no smell, and it lasts for a long time. Whatever the herb smells like, is what it will taste like. It’s a really beautiful process to see grow, because it’s a much cleaner way to ingest your herb. It feels better.

IN THE US, WE'RE HAVING A VAPING EPIDEMIC. HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THAT?

Yes, I’ve vaped before, but I personally believe that if I ingest herb, water needs to be involved. Steaming has actually increased my lung capacity – I used to be asthmatic. Getting (clean) ganja deep into my lungs was extremely healing for me. What I practice, I call it Chalice

Pranayama. So I will teach pranayama first, then I teach them how to use their steamers, so that the way they approach steaming is different. It’s amazing.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR USE OF HERB HAS INFLUENCED YOUR MEDITATION PRACTICE?

I’m growing into my meditation practice. Meditation is my final frontier. I’ll have a very meditative approach to my {yoga} sequences but I don’t think I’ve truly achieved what I think meditation is just yet. But I also know that a lot of it is the process. Just striving for that has been very cathartic for me.

IT'S GOING TO BE A LIFELONG PROCESS.

I can imagine... because it is about the journey. As well as the destination. Meditation is one of the 8 limbs of yoga. So it’s about learning how to deal with yourself, other people, breathing, withdrawing your senses inward, practicing the asanas, concentration, before you even get to meditation.

INTERVIEW BY MEDITATION MAGAZINE

JAH9 IS A RASTAFARIAN YOGA TEACHER & REGGAE MUSICIAN IN JAMAICA. SHE HELPED MAKE “CHALICE PRANAYAMA” (STEAMING GANJA) A WIDESPREAD PRACTICE IN JAMAICA, AND OFFERS HER YOGA TEACHING TO PEOPLE IN NEED WHO CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE YOGA CLASSES. OUTSIDE OF THE COVID LOCKDOWN, JAH9 HOSTS YOGA RETREATS ALL AROUND THE WORLD, ACCOMPANIED BY HER REGGAE BAND, YOGA ON DUB. HER LAST STUDIO ALBUM, NOTE TO SELF, WAS RELEASED IN MARCH 2020.

bliss out in your house



Photo by Andrea Picquadio

SEVEN SIMPLE MEDITATION TECHNIQUES TO TRY AT HOME

HERE ARE SEVEN EXTREMELY SIMPLE, BUT EXTREMELY POWERFUL, MEDITATION TECHNIQUES THAT YOU CAN TRY AT HOME. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ONE OF THE TECHNIQUES, TAG US ON INSTAGRAM @MEDITATIONMAG

INHABITING THE BODY

Bring your attention fully into your body, now. You spend so much time in your head. Why not spend some time in your body? Fill your entire body with the light of your awareness, now. Leave no part out. Elbows, feet, scalp, butt, even your internal organs! The beat of your heart, the gurgles in your stomach, the warmth in your... nether regions... feel **everything**. This is what it feels like to be alive, in this body, in the present moment! Sit for a few minutes, and just enjoy the experience of being alive, in your body, in this moment.

AWAKENING TO THE SIX SENSES

Now that you are awake, in your body — or should we say, your body is awake to itself? — notice that certain parts of your body have very unique kinds of sensations. The sensations in your arms and your legs, chest, back, shoulders, etc, are all pretty similar. We call those “kinesthetic sensations” or the sense of **touch**. But what about the sensations in your eyeballs (the things we call **sights**)? What about the sensations in your eardrums (the things we call **sounds**)? What about the sensations in your nose (**smells**), and the ones on your tongue (**tastes**)? What about the sensations that keep arising in your mind (**thoughts**)? What do those feel like? Just rest now, in the experience of all six senses.

WATCHING THE BREATH

Having awakened to your body and all five of your senses, it's likely that you noticed the sensations of the breathing at some point. You may have noticed the sensations in your nostrils - the subtle sensations as the air flows in and out. You may also have noticed the sensations in your torso - your chest and your abdomen - as the body inflates on the inhale, and deflates on the exhale. Concentrate your mind in the breathing process now. Don't try to change it in any way. Don't make it slower or faster, deeper or shallower. Just focus on the sensations of the

breathing, as it is, naturally, in this moment.

You can choose to focus on:

- Just the sensations in the nostrils
- Just the sensations in the torso
- Or both!

Take a few minutes now, just to watch your breathing.

PLAYING WITH THE BREATH

While in Buddhist traditions there is a focus on Just Watching (like the **Watching The Breath** meditation above), the Yogic traditions of India and Nepal produced some really powerful “Pranayama” - or “Breath control” - meditations. In this meditation, instead of just watching the breath, you'll actually play around with it.

There are two basic ways you can adjust your breathing: speed, and depth. You can breath faster vs. slower, and you can breath shallower vs. deeper.

SLOW + SHALLOW is not bringing in a lot of oxygen. It feels almost like you're not breathing at all. This is a breathing pattern that you can get into when you're already extremely relaxed, in a very deep meditative state, but is not recommended for everyday life.

SLOW + DEEP is suuuuper relaxed and meditative. Great for calming down. Great for being Zen in everyday life.

FAST + SHALLOW is like a dog panting — and it creates similar mental states (excited, anxious).

FAST + DEEP is a very powerful pranayama that floods your body with oxygen. It kind of sounds like you're having a panic attack when you do it, so it's good to do it where other people won't hear you (and be worried about you). But it can produce very intense states in your body, including tingling, dizziness, and even muscle spasms. Even though it feels weird to practice it, it is super healing for your body and your nervous system.

Try all four of these types of breathing... see how they feel. This way you learn how to control your mental state by adjusting your breath in daily life.

SINGLE-SENSE MEDITATIONS

IN THE “AWAKENING TO THE SIX SENSES” MEDITATION, WE AWAKENED TO ALL SIX SENSES BY GOING THROUGH EACH ONE QUICKLY. IN THE MEDITATIONS BELOW, WE’LL DIVE INTO SMELL, SIGHT, AND TASTE MORE DEEPLY.

SMELL MEDITATION

Notice what you’re smelling right now. It may be the smell of cut grass, or baking bread, or it may be the smell of a garbage can you are now regretting sitting next to. It might even be the smell of “nothing” -- the infinite non-existence that surrounds all other smells, and allows for all smells to exist. Like listening to the silence that underlies all sounds, notice the no-smell that underlies all smells. Whatever you happen to be smelling right now, experience it with curiosity & equanimity. Close your eyes, and dive into the sense of smell, now.

SIGHT MEDITATION

Notice what you’re seeing right now. Using my superhuman meditation wizard powers, I’ll guess that you’re seeing these words -- tiny black shapes on a white background. Notice what you’re seeing *around* the words. The white space. The meditation cushions ad to the right. And what about outside of this magazine? What’s surrounding it? Just be aware of everything that you see, your entire visual field. Dive into it now. Look around, but don’t focus on anything in particular. Just be aware of what your eyeballs are seeing. Notice that you’re seeing more than just objects -- you’re seeing a whole, unified visual experience, including colors, shapes, and even empty space! You can even walk around in this state. It’s a powerful exercise and a beautiful experience. Try it now!

TASTE MEDITATION

Notice what you’re tasting right now. Most people don’t even think about the sense of taste when there’s no food or drink or other foreign substance in their mouths. But you’re always experiencing the sense of taste. Maybe you’re just tasting the inside of your mouth. That’s fine. Just notice what the taste sensations feel like, now. Close your eyes, and dive deeply into it. Allow your mind to rest in the experience of the sense of taste, now.



TAKING SENSE MEDITATIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

To intensify these meditations, meditate on intense sense objects. Light some incense or essential oils, and use them in a deep smell meditation. Stare into a candle flame, a fireplace, or a sunset for a deep sight meditation. Grab a fruit and savor it slowly for a deep taste meditation.

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with this
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REMEMBERING





RAM DASS WAS A LIGHT TO THE WORLD; ONE OF THE GREATEST IN OUR LIFETIMES.

Ram Dass was very special to us here at Meditation Magazine. When I met my wife & spiritual partner Jovanna in Miami in 2012, one of the first things that attracted me to her were the words “Be Here Now” tattooed on the inside of her wrist. These are words that I had considered tattooing on my own forearm before I’d met her. I was impressed and intrigued by the fact that she had actually done it. “Be Here Now” are powerful words, a call to presence, that can help the anxious mind return from its wanderings, back to the shining reality of the present moment.

Before Ram Dass wrote his iconic “Be Here Now,” he was known as Richard Alpert. Richard had grown up in a wealthy family in New York. His father had been the President of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company, and one of the founders of Brandeis University. Richard grew up as successful in his field as his father had been. He was working with Timothy Leary in the psychology department at Harvard University when he discovered the power of psychedelics, like mushrooms and LSD, to transform consciousness and open new doors of perception. Along with Leary, Alpert was a pioneer in the psychedelic movement throughout the 60s and 70s, and became a powerful influence for an entire generation.

Unlike Leary, Alpert moved beyond psychedelics in his quest to develop a more comprehensive map of consciousness. His pilgrimage into the human mind led him to the Himalayas, where he met his guru, Neem Karoli Baba (aka Maharaji), who many have described as an “enlightened being.” The story goes that Alpert gave Maharaji a strong dose of LSD, and the acid didn’t affect him at all. Having had his mind blown by this awakened master, Richard Alpert evolved into Ram Dass, a spiritual teacher who brought Maharaji’s powerful teachings of meditation, presence, and love back to the United States, further transforming western culture and civilization. Through his eloquent, entertaining, and creative interpretations of the ancient teachings into western terms, for western sensibilities, Ram Dass forever changed the course of western civilization. The peace, love, and presence he infused into our culture will raise the level of consciousness around the world for generations to come.

Ram Dass died on December 22nd, 2019, the day after we published our first national issue of Meditation Magazine. Since then we’ve had the honor of speaking with two of his close associates: Raghu Markus -- who traveled to India with Ram Dass in the 1970s and currently serves as the Executive Director of the Love Serve Remember Foundation - and Matthew Ceurvorst, who was a personal caretaker for Ram Dass in his last years of life.

BY KEVIN ELLERTON



RAGHU MARKUS AND RAM DASS

INTERVIEW WITH

RAGHU MARKUS

HOW DID YOU KNOW RAM DASS?

When [Ram Dass] first came back from India in the late 60s, I was really young and I was running a radio station in Montreal. That's how I met him. His people called to ask us to promote that he was giving a talk at McGill University. So up I went into something that I had no idea what was gonna happen. I didn't know who Ram Dass was... I knew Richard Alpert and Tim Leary quite well. So they sent me over a tape. It was one of those things -- like most people who hear Ram Dass for the first time go: "Oh my god! Right! Every word is ringing a bell!"

And it rang all the bells for me: that there was a path to fulfillment, happiness, freedom, whatever you want! I mean I had been into that stuff before, it wasn't brand new to me, but still.

So then I went over to meet him, and when I met him he was just alone in a house in Montreal. And he just opened the door and we were just, you know, right there with each other. Just a few feet away. That incredible presence that he had from the get-go -- just enveloping. So he completely gave me total attention and enveloped me in this unconditionality. There was no Richard, there was no Ram Dass, it was just me in a pool that he had

created so that I could luxuriate in this tremendous feeling of love and trust. And then he came to the station and we put his lectures on, and the switchboard just lit up. I mean people were like "wow, what's this?"

So from there I got to India. I badgered [Ram Dass] because he wasn't supposed to say anything about Maharaji. Neem Karoli Baba said, "Don't talk about me in America." And that's all [Ram Dass] did! And at some point I asked him, not that long ago, "Why did you do that?" He said: "I brought back this jewel, and I could not NOT share it. And that's the essence of who he is and what he's done, all these decades until he passed.

IT SEEMS THAT RAM DASS WENT THROUGH THIS KIND OF EVOLUTION OVER THE COURSE OF HIS LIFE, FROM PSYCHEDELICS TO MEDITATION. WERE YOU ABLE TO WITNESS THAT TRANSFORMATION? DO YOU REMEMBER HIM BEING DIFFERENT DURING THE PSYCHEDELIC TIMES AND THE MEDITATION TIMES?

That's not quite correct. There's not a delineating line, psychedelics / meditation. And meditation isn't the right word. Probably, his pursuit of a map of consciousness is what led him from psychedelics to India. But that didn't mean he stopped taking psychedelics. Obviously nothing like he used to, but he certainly still engaged and experimented after he came back from India. Much less, but it was still there. So it's much more fluid.

His evolution had nothing to do with just psychedelics or just meditative practices. It had to do with a lot of things. It had to do with -- of course those things -- it had to do with service, working with dying people, working with compassion, all of these things went into a big stew. And that's why Ram Dass is really great, because he investigated so many different traditions. Everyone's got a little bit of a different penchant towards one thing or another that turns them on in terms of spiritual path. So the fact that he had experience and so many of them was a great thing, and it allowed people to be able to enter into these different streams, whichever one appealed to them. But in terms of his evolution, it was everything. It wasn't one thing or another, it was everything. He wrote a book, "Grist For The Mill." Everything that's in front of you that you're engaging with is spiritual path. That was a great teaching.

WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE TO BE IN RAM DASS'S PRESENCE?

I'll give you an example because I don't want to make it too much part of mind-stuff. One day last year I was

staying with him and it was morning time and he hadn't come downstairs for breakfast. I had a lot of stuff in my head about producing whatever I was producing with him, you know, whether it be a retreat, whatever I was doing.

So I had a bunch of things. "I gotta talk to Ram Dass, we've got to get this straight now, we got all these meetings, the film guy's coming," whatever. So I ran upstairs because I needed to do it right away. And I go in, and he's in his bathroom, and he was shaving. He looked up at me coming in with all that energy, and he just carefully put the razor down on the counter on the sink and he just encountered me with his eyes the way he first did, when I met him the very first time. And everything in my head went away. All the stuff that I was wanting to produce with him: gone. And I was just inhabiting that moment with him. Fortunately I had enough sense to let go as soon as I saw him, and we just let go into this space for a few minutes, a couple of minutes, and it was total loving presence. As he used to call it, "we burrowed into the moment." Simple as that. He had that ability to do that because he was just less attached to thoughts, less concerned. His concern was presence.

DID RAM DASS HAVE A CONSISTENT MEDITATION PRACTICE THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, OR WAS HE JUST TRYING TO "BE HERE NOW?"

RM: He experimented with a lot of different practices, including Buddhist practices. He spent time in East Asia doing Insight Meditation practices, mantra practice, he did it all. And he used it all at different times, for whatever he felt that would help him to evolve. So he had a constant day-to-day practice. In Maui later in life he did far less formal practice, that practice of just being present, you know he didn't need to get there, if you know what I mean. He was just needing to sit and look at the ocean and you know he loved everyone, loved everything, and he just did that. But we still did

stuff, chanting and Hanuman Chalisa, satsang... it was still going on but it was less formal than before the stroke.

THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE THAT SAY THEY DON'T NEED THE SIT-DOWN PRACTICE EVERY DAY; THEY JUST TRY TO DO THE MINDFULNESS OF LIFE AND MINDFULNESS IN ACTION. PERSONALLY FOR ME I FEEL IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT TO HAVE THAT MORNING AND EVENING MEDITATION. DID RAM DASS HAVE THAT TYPE OF STRUCTURE, OR DID HE LIVE MORE IN THE MINDFULNESS OF ACTION SPACE?

No, no! He had total structure. He advised total structure. In fact anyone who says "oh I'm just, you know, mindful of eating, and mindful of walking..." it's a good thing. Do it! But without a meditative practice it's not worth shit! Because you're easily fooling yourself if you can't get at the deeper levels of understanding yourself. That's what meditation is. It's not about becoming a better anything. It's about understanding yourself. And you know people that say, "yeah we don't need to do that..." it's just another way of not dealing with yourself.

YOU WERE CLOSE WITH RAM DASS FOR A LONG TIME. NOW THAT HE'S GONE DOES IT FEEL LIKE HE'S LEFT YOUR LIFE? DOES IT FEEL LIKE HE'S STILL THERE?

All of it. All of the above. I can't pick up the phone and call him, can't hear that sense of humor... but at the same time it's a constant presence. Fortunately the kind of work that I do -- directing the foundation and the podcast network and ramdass.org -- you know I am putting everything through his mind in terms of how people should be treated, in terms of being able to really watch the self-interest and the motivations, and so he's with me all the time through that. As Joseph Goldstein said, don't conflate loss with grief. I'm trying not to do that myself.

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MATTHEW 'PAVAN DAS' CEURVORST
WITH RAM DASS



BY MATTHEW 'PAVAN DAS' CEURVORST

"I AM LOVING AWARENESS"

RAM DASS CHAMPIONED MANY MEDITATION TECHNIQUES THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE, FROM VIPASSANA MEDITATION TO BHAKTI YOGA AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. IN HIS LATER YEARS, HE DISTILLED HIS ENTIRE BODY OF TEACHINGS INTO THE ESSENTIAL AND ENCOMPASSING MANTRA.

"I am loving awareness" is a radical statement that goes a step beyond the conventional perspective of "the witness", an equanimous state of mind that bears witness to all phenomena, and infuses the quality of unconditional love. Loving aware-

ness is a statement of our deepest identity and another name for the soul.

For Ram Dass, this was more than just a trite statement of new age spirituality. Loving awareness was an expres-

sion of his being, the fruit of a lifetime of practice.

It's easy to hold an idea of unconditional love that only pertains to other people or ourselves. But Ram Dass illustrated that unconditional love is

for the entire world, not just people, but every chair, rug, and glass of water.

After spending years absorbed in his talks and teachings, life conspired to bring me to Maui, where I served as a caregiver for Ram Dass in the last year of his life. After a stroke left him paralyzed on the right side of his body, Ram Dass' everyday life required intimate and immediate care. This care often manifested as daily routines set by his beloved aide, Dassi Ma, that were then carried out by his caregivers. Every morning at 8:30 I'd prepare a glass of ice water. Selecting a fine blue plastic cup with a thick silicone straw to match, I'd stuff the glass to the brim with ice cubes before filling the remaining crevices with water - "Full Ice" as RD would request. Of all the spiritual powers he cultivated in his life, the inability to contract a 'brain freeze' was certainly one of them.

My excitement grew as I climbed the steps to his quarters, carrying my precious gift of ice water. Obviously, it wasn't that cup or the water that made it precious, but the impending interaction was a jewel in our daily routine.

Entering the bedroom and announcing my presence with a "Good morning!" I'd be met by a quick response from Dassi who was already busy with potions and lotions. Ram Dass would smile and respond with a frog-throated "Good morning", more pronounced in the shape of his lips than the volume of his response.

I'd raise the frosty glass in presentation, a sly grin forming on my face. He'd look with the same expression of excitement and surprise, morning after morning, as if seeing it for the very first time. Eyebrows raised with his lips forming an 'O' shape, as if to say "Oh boy, Oh boy, Oh boy!" Calling for the glass with an outstretched hand, I'd slide next to him

in bed, commencing the precarious dance of holding the glass straight and bending the straw while desperately trying to avoid spilling any of the ice-cold water on his tissued skin. Opening his mouth like a babe he'd draw on the straw till his mouth was full, closing his eyes and pushing the water into his puffed cheeks, holding it there for a moment before a much anticipated *GULP*.

Time seemed to freeze in that moment, meditating upon the sensation of ice-cold water dispersing in his body. "Oh....My...God..." he'd say with such rapture, as if the water had been transmuted to ambrosia. His joy was contagious, a smile now firmly fixed to my cheeks.

He'd suckle the straw till the last drop before raising his hand to signal he was finished, the end of this morning's dance. He was satiated, and I was fulfilled beyond measure. How could bringing someone a glass of water elicit so much joy, love and fulfillment in my own heart?

This is what Loving Awareness looked like - through his presence the simple act of sharing ice water became a deep expression of love and communion.

Ram Dass taught me that the greatest gift we can offer someone is our undivided attention, and that we can deeply serve others through the quality of our own being. In this way, Ram Dass's love continues to permeate the world today.

Matthew is a chant leader, yoga instructor and mindfulness coach. He is a member of Kripa, a kirtan group that works to lower barriers of access to spiritual teachings and practices. And he serves on the board of Hanuman Maui - Ram Dass Loving Awareness Sanctuary, continuing the legacy of Ram Dass on Maui. Learn more at: kripa.guru & hanumanmaui.org





**DANCE
MEDITATION**
**HOW TO TURN
MEDITATION INTO A RAVE**

(AND WHY IT WORKS!)

DANCE MEDITATION: HOW TO TURN MEDITATION INTO A RAVE

BY NATASHA ZOLOTAREVA

In the late 1960s, The Beatles traveled to India to experience transcendental meditation at the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi ashram, catapulting meditation into western media and culture.

Despite meditation gaining popularity thanks to The Beatles, many individuals living the fast-paced lifestyle of modern Western culture simply found meditation to be difficult, inaccessible, or unattainable.

Thus, a movement began, to adapt meditation to the needs and interests of the modern, Western lifestyle.

EVOLVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF A DIFFERENT CULTURE

As the movement to adapt meditation picked up steam, people in the West discovered other forms of meditation -- forms that involved movement, a striking contrast from the stereotypical image of the monk sitting in absolute stillness.

Dynamic Meditation was introduced into the United States around the 1970s by an Indian mystic named Osho. Tai Chi was thrust into the lime-

light when Bruce Lee films popularised Eastern martial arts in mainstream Western culture. Tai Chi, in particular, gained traction as “meditation in motion” because it focuses on connecting the mind and body through gentle movements that promote serenity.

Fast-forward to the 1990s, and a new trend was sweeping the world: raves and Electronic Dance Music (EDM).



The golden question was: if the dancing of dynamic meditation and gentle motions of tai chi could promote similar effects to transcendental meditation, is it possible for someone to get the same benefits by dancing to modern EDM-style music?

RETURNING THE RAVE TO ITS SPIRITUAL ROOTS

Many people see “raves” and “spiritual experiences” as completely different - even opposite - things. This perception is not surprising, as modern raves have been associated with things like angry rebellion, drunken rowdiness and drug overdoses.

At their core, raves are not that much different from the spiritual experiences our ancestors had through their tribal rituals. The ancient tribes of Africa were using the very same tech-

niques of music and movement thousands of years ago to create communal experiences that nurture the soul and enhance the mind. Unfortunately, modern raves have fallen victim to commercialisation & trends, obscuring their original meaning of community, connection, and spiritual evolution.

The good news is that this trend is not irreversible. It is possible to return the rave to its spiritual roots by leveraging what science now understands about brainwave entrainment and breathwork.

HOW TO TURN RAVES INTO MEDITATION RETREATS

Brainwave entrainment is a new technology that guides the mind into peak meditative states through rhythmic beats. This fascinating discovery accelerated how meditation evolved in

modern culture. Today, you can find many new technologies that leverage our understanding of entering peak meditative brain states.

These have ranged from pulsed electromagnetic field therapy (PEMF) devices to apps with binaural beats, and even EDM music. It has been found that music designed with beats supporting brainwave entrainment act as a shortcut for people to experience the benefits of meditation quickly.

Belinda Matwali, a pioneer in the EDM Meditation movement, has been using brainwave entertainment EDM tracks to accelerate the results of meditation. Her fusion of electronic music in meditations has helped students worldwide leverage electronic music as a vehicle for training consciousness, awareness and self-realization.

Another notable influence is Niraj Naik, music producer and the founder of SOMA Breath. He uses brainwave entertainment EDM tracks with dance and specific pranayama breathing exercises, which puts a modern spin on dynamic meditation or “moving meditation”.

The result is substance-free raves that help participants achieve the benefits of meditation and breathwork, from experiencing a consistent flow of energy, increased productivity, improved moods, higher resistance to stress, and more.

EXPLORE THE EVOLUTION OF MEDITATION

Meditation is not a rigid practice that can only be done in a certain way. Just like culture, language, fashion, and all other aspects of human development, meditation can—and has—evolved to fit into the people and culture of the times. The key is to keep an open mind and explore all the different avenues of achieving the benefits of meditation until you find one that feels good to your soul.



RACHEL BRATHEN

@YOGA_GIRL

STRENGTH & VULNERABILITY

BY JOVANNA BENAVENTE

Growing up as a shy girl in Miami with a tendency toward eastern spirituality, like-minded friends were hard for me to come by.

My young life was defined by the sisterhood I'd created with childhood friends, and a part of me shattered when those bonds weren't strong enough to withstand the tests of growing up with radically different value systems. I spent my early twenties traveling the world, but my shyness got in the way of forming new bonds & connections.

Rachel Brathen is a pioneer of authenticity in social media. She is now CEO of several successful businesses around the world; she is also a mother, a wife, and an internationally recognized yoga teacher. She runs Sgt. Peppers Friends, an organization dedicated to saving stray dogs and cats all around Aruba & placing them in homes around the world. She also started The Yoga Girl Foundation, with its first course of action to begin building an orphanage for the children of Aruba in need of safe homes.

For years, I didn't have any like-minded friends to call and talk to about the things that kept me up at night. All I had to feel like I wasn't alone in the world with my worries & dreams were Rachel's Instagram posts, her stories, and her weekly podcast episodes. In many ways, I consider her an unofficial mentor for my life.

Since I was a little girl, I knew in my bones that I was meant to be a mother. That was all I knew that I wanted in this lifetime, and I thought that in order to be the best mom I could be, motherhood had to be my greatest aspiration.

Seeing Rachel test the boundaries of what a wife and mother can accomplish outside of her home, all while maintaining beautiful relationships with those closest to her, has completely eradicated any limitations society once convinced me I had as a woman.

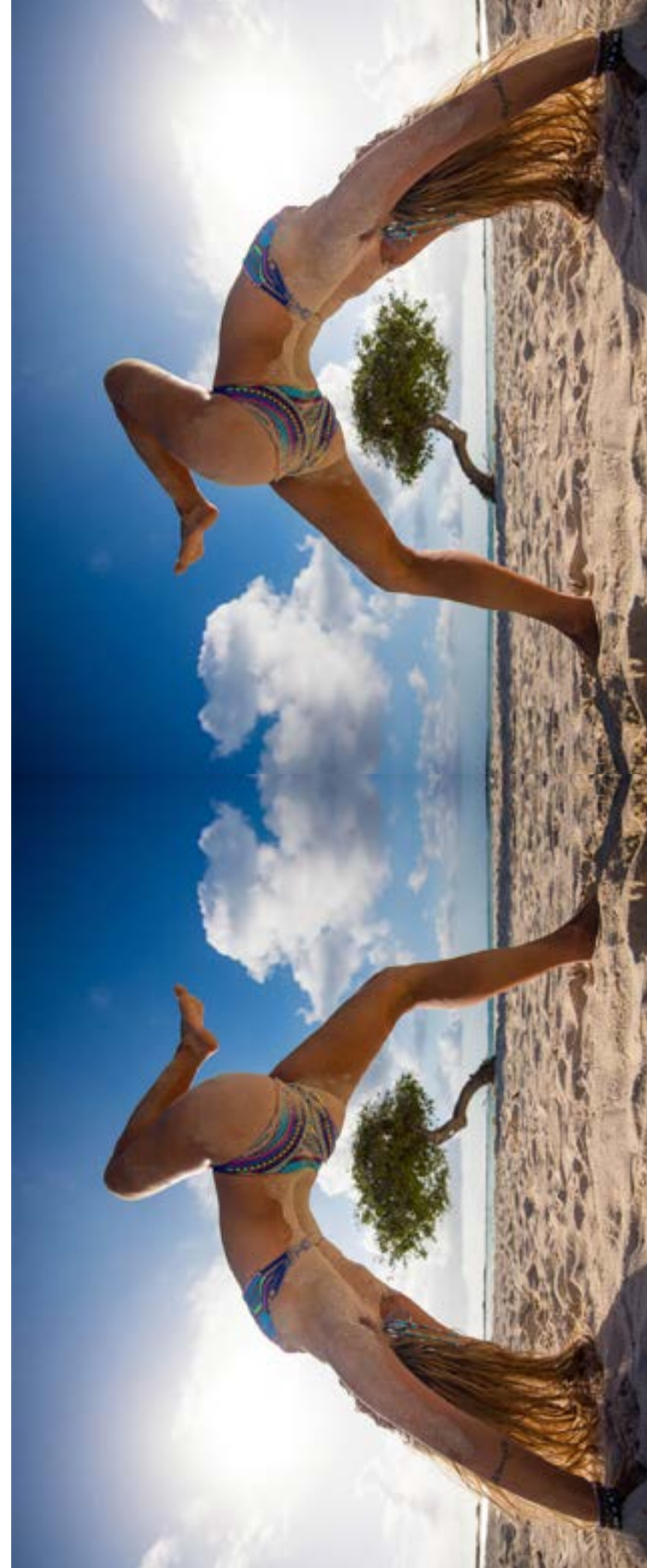
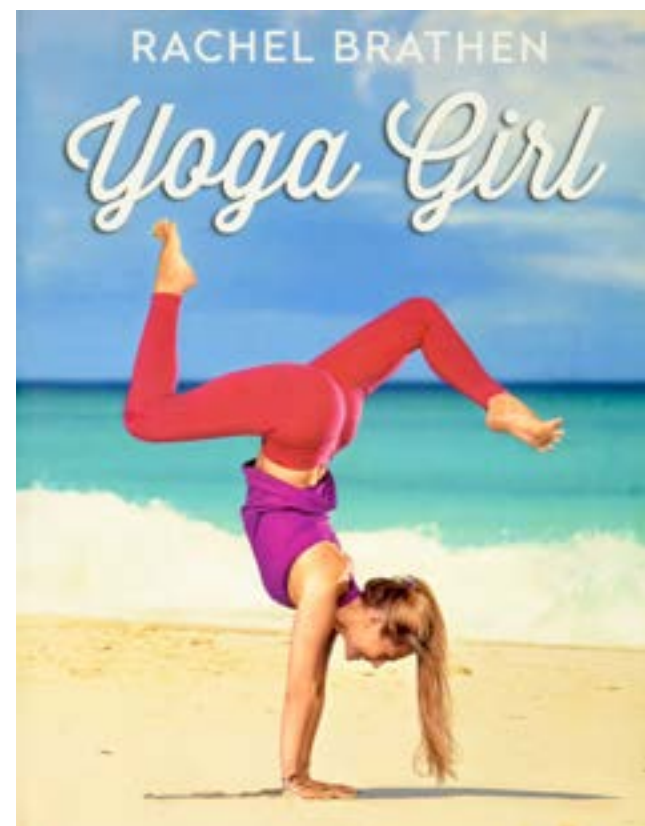
Rachel has become a pioneer of the yoga & wellness world simply by being her most vulnerable, authentic self (and working her ass off). Through her open, honest, unfiltered Instagram account, Rachel has allowed us to witness her deepest sorrows and greatest joys over the years, and in doing so, gave us permission to be human when we thought we had to be perfect.

A presence so rare in our current social media age of pretense and feigned perfection, it is no wonder Rachel is beloved by so many. She shares her heart with us, she allows us to see her flawed humanity and the great depths of her wisdom... and by doing so, she has inspired me & many others to do the same. To wake up to our worth and our power; to realize that we too are beautiful and brilliant and capable of making this world a better place in our own way.

Empowered people empower people. This is the work that Rachel is doing every single day, from her work as a yoga teacher, to her various charities that strive to better the lives of those who are most vulnerable in this world.

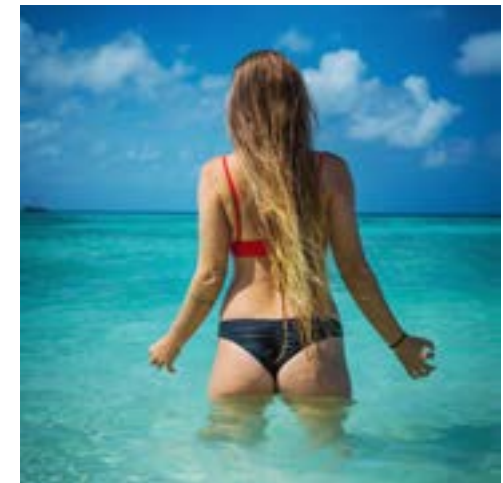
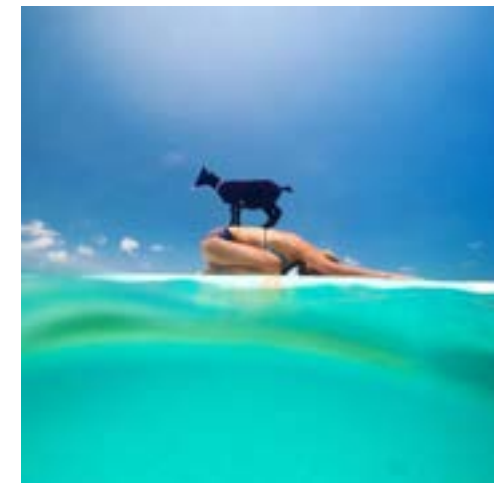
BY JOVANNA BENAVENTE

Opposite: @yoga_girl was one of the first & most impactful influencers spreading the beauty and wisdom of yoga & meditation on Instagram. She touched the lives of millions of followers before words like "influencer" and #instayogi were even a thing.





Rachel began her journey into spiritual superstardom as a young girl in Sweden (bottom right). Over the years, she has evolved into a wife, mother, teacher, author, podcaster, serial entrepreneur & humanitarian. You can follow her epic journey on Instagram @yoga_girl.





INTERVIEW WITH

RACHEL BRATHEN

“I FOUND MEDITATION BEFORE I STARTED PRACTICING ASANA (THE PHYSICAL PART OF YOGA), SO IT’S BEEN A MORE ESSENTIAL PART TO MY OVERALL WELL-BEING THAN THE PHYSICAL POSTURES. BUT IT DOESN’T LOOK AS EXCITING ONLINE. PEOPLE TEND TO GRAVITATE TOWARDS THE PHYSICAL ASPECT OF YOGA, BUT MEDITATION IS ESSENTIAL. WITHOUT IT, WE’RE NOT REALLY PRACTICING.”

IT’S INTERESTING TO KNOW THAT YOU STARTED WITH MEDITATION. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED?

I was seventeen, and going through a very turbulent time in my teenage years. My whole life had been turbulent, but from twelve or thirteen up until seventeen was just... pretty awful. Really, really dark. I didn’t have any sense of direction, didn’t really ever feel happy, was very depressed. Drinking a lot... you know, doing a lot of regular teenage stuff... but mine came with a sense of a darkness that I didn’t know how to escape. It was actually my mom who pushed me to go to a meditation center in Sweden, about 3 hours from where we lived at the time. [Meditation] had helped her, and I could sort of see a holistic shift in her from using these holistic tools. I gave it a go. I remember I was on a train to go to this place for seven days and panicking completely. I wanted to turn back, and when I got into my cab, I changed my mind. I told the cab driver to take me back to the train station but this man, this angel, he just pulled over to the side of the road, looked me in the eyes and gently said:

“Hey, I’ve driven a lot of people to this place, and everyone is always really happy that they went. So how about I give you my phone number, you go

there, and if you change your mind, just call me, and I’ll get you.”

So that is what really gave me the courage to go. And it completely changed my life. So I will always remember him as a savior.

SINCE THEN, WHAT HAS YOUR PATH BEEN INTO THE YOGA/MEDITATION LIFE?

My first introduction to meditation was not silent meditation, it was not TM... it was actually Osho meditation, or Dynamic Meditation specifically, which has been my anchor for the last fifteen years. Those meditations where you move your body to get to the point of stillness, those have been essential in the more turbulent periods of my life. It’s what’s easier for me.

From there, I was able to learn how to quiet my mind, and was able to find a practice of waking up in the morning and finding peace. But I wouldn’t have had that if it wasn’t for the other tools that I was using too. Then, about two years later, I was in a lot of back pain. I have scoliosis, I was in two car accidents. So one day someone told me, “hey, you meditate all the time, why don’t you try yoga?” And I said, “oh, that’s not for me. I’m not one of those yoga people. I can’t touch my toes, I’m

not flexible, I’m not...” and I just had this idea that yoga wasn’t for me.

But I tried it anyway, found a teacher that I really resonated with, and while I didn’t have that “light bulb” moment that a lot of people have in their first year of practicing, for me it was a gradual progression of going back and feeling a little better in my body every day until it eventually it just became a habit, a natural part of my practice.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS YOU’VE GOTTEN FROM MEDITATION/YOGA?

Personally, it doesn’t really interest me that much if I can’t apply it to my everyday life. So, I’ll sit in meditation for twenty minutes every morning and I’ll take a one hour yoga class. It’s really interesting to me, the other twenty-two hours of the day: how does that make me feel, and can I apply what I’m learning to my real life? Knowing how to quiet my mind, or at least being able to grab onto something, like a buoy in a stormy sea... that ability, to use my practice when my toddler is throwing a tantrum, or I’m frustrated with something, or I’m feeling anxious... that’s when it becomes really applicable to me. Being able to use those tools in those very important moments, sitting in my sadhana every day, that is what helps me get back to [stillness].

ON KEEPING IT REAL

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT RESONATES WITH PEOPLE IS THAT YOU'RE NOT JUST SOME FAKE INSTAGRAM INFLUENCER; YOU'RE REAL, AUTHENTIC & VULNERABLE. HOW DID YOU GET TO BE SO OPEN LIKE THAT?

[Vulnerability] is a really big part of my healing process now. Exposure work or shadow work is essential when it comes to healing, especially heavy wounds or baggage, or pains that we have from our past.

So when I'm moving through something, talking about that -- just like you would in therapy, or talking something out with a friend -- I use the podcast for that, and feel really good doing that. And every time I do, it reminds me that I'm not alone, because I get feedback from people who feel the same.

It's really easy, especially when you're having a hard time with something, to put yourself in the place of: "Oh, but no one feels this way." You know: "It's easy for everyone and it's just hard for me." Or you know, Everybody has a good time and I don't..."

"...WE HAVE THESE [IDEALIZED] IDEAS OF OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES, BECAUSE PEOPLE AREN'T VULNERABLE ENOUGH. AND I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO CUT THROUGH SOME OF THAT NOISE, SO THAT YOU CAN GET TO THE HUMANITY BENEATH ALL OF IT. AND YEAH, I REALLY ENJOY IT.

SO I THINK IT'S NICE THAT I DON'T HAVE TO PUT ON A FACE, LIKE: 'I'M RECORDING THE PODCAST, I HAVE TO BE THIS PERSON NOW.' IT'S NICE TO JUST BE WHO I AM THAT DAY."

These excerpts are just from the first few minutes. To watch the full Rachel Brathen x MedMag Interview, check out meditationmag.com/interviews/rachel-brathen or just scan this QR code (at right) with your phone!



PEER REVIEWED STUDIES:

CAN MEDITATION PREVENT FLU?



TWO PEER REVIEWED SCIENTIFIC STUDIES CONFIRM:
MEDITATION CAN HELP PREVENT FLU, REDUCE SYMPTOMS,
AND HELP YOU FEEL BETTER EVEN WHEN YOU’RE SICK.

While exercise has long been known to keep you healthy, a recent study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Annals of Family Medicine* found that meditation is *even more effective than exercise* in terms of keeping colds and flus at bay.

In this study, Dr. Bruce Barrett split his 154 non-meditator, non-exerciser test subjects into three groups:

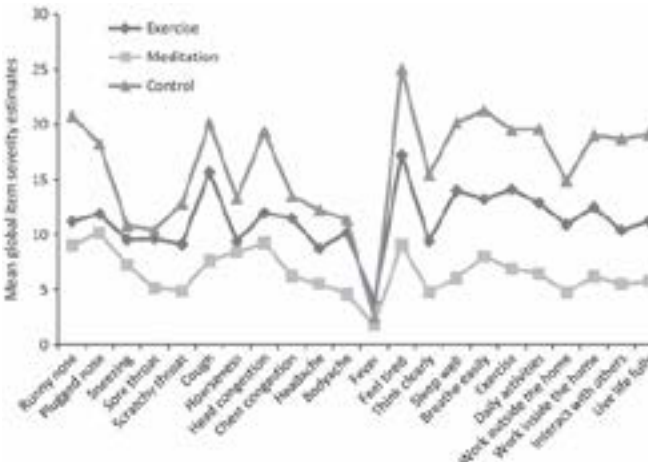
- 1 **Control Group.** This group did not do anything out of the ordinary during the study period.
- 2 **Exercise Group.** This group engaged in moderate exercise during the study period.
- 3 **Meditation Group.** This group engaged in meditation — Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) technique, to be precise — during the study period.

The three groups were monitored for ARI (acute respiratory infection) symptoms, like those of the cold and the flu. The control group fared the worst; their illnesses lasted longer, their symptoms were more severe, and they missed more days of work than the people in the exercise & meditation groups. Strikingly, the meditation group fared even better than the exercise group.

A second study (Obasi *et al*), published in the peer-reviewed journal **Influenza And Other Respiratory Viruses** analyzed the results of Dr. Barrett’s study, and found an interesting pattern to help explain why the meditation group did *so* much better than either of the other two groups. While the meditation group fared the best in pretty much every category studied (everything from having a less runny nose to lower fever temperatures to

being able to go to work and interact better with other people), the biggest difference between the meditators and the non-meditators was their functionality while sick. The meditators were able to handle (and feel OK with) their symptoms far, far better than the people in the non-meditating groups.

This chart from the Obasi study pretty much says it all:



These results are not surprising, considering the thousands of years of anecdotal evidence indicating the meditation can improve your immune system and make you more resistant to illness. Wim Hof (interviewed in our Winter 2019 issue) has been practicing his unique meditations in extreme weather conditions (atop Everest, in the Namib Desert, under the ice in frozen lakes, etc) and claims he has not been sick in several decades.

In these times of worldwide pandemic, this is just another reason that practicing meditation is more important than ever.



FINDING COMFORT IN THE MIDDLE OF CHAOS

BY FORREST NEAL



We're always looking for passionate, talented meditation activists to help us fulfill our mission of amplifying meditation in the millennial generation.

JOIN THE MED-MAG TEAM!

WRITING: We're looking for the Alan Wattses, the Ram Dasses, the Eckhart Tolles, Pema Chödröns and Nisargadattas of our generation. Imagine reading a fun, colorful magazine filled with powerful, mind-blowing, satori-inducing writing, of that style and quality. That's what we aspire to, and that's what Meditation Magazine is growing toward with each passing issue. Join us.

MARKETING: Got a knack for increasing ROAS and decreasing CPA?

SOCIAL: Have you scaled a social account to 100k+ while keeping it real (no shady tricks)?

EXECUTIVE: Are you a talented manifestor who moves mountains to make things happen?

SALES: Are you a master of persuasion -- and also meditation?

CREATIVE: Are you an InDesign, Photoshop, or Premiere Pro wizard?

CAPITALIST: Are you a master of the capitalist arts - generating and growing funds?

OTHERS: Can you help us in some other way we totally forgot to mention?

IF you answered "yes" to any of those questions, AND you're a passionate meditator who wants to help raise the consciousness of our species, to use your life to make an impact on our planet, for a better now and a better future - THEN EMAIL US! HELLO@MEDITATIONMAG.COM

Here I am, enjoying this beautiful moment of life, as I take a breath and smile. But it hasn't always been this way.

Chaos and confusion have been recurring themes in my life. In these modern times, life is changing at a pace that very few people naturally find comfort in. Many people, such as myself, have gone to the lengths of seeking professional help to manage chronic stress, anxiety, and confusion with prescription drugs! I was willing to do anything to settle the constant buzz I was feeling -- that constant drive to move, to do more things -- but the only solutions involved taking prescription drugs, and continuing to live as I always had.

When I started drinking to dull the stimulation from the drugs I was taking, I knew I had a problem! That's when I met Dr. Nena Nimit. Dr. Nimit showed me how to practice meditation, a tool that ended up being far more effective than the drugs I had

been prescribed.

Eventually, I gained enough confidence to challenge myself and test my technique, to see if I was fooling myself or if something was really happening. I wanted to find the single location that unearthed my stress and anxiety beyond anything else in life.

During a heavenly sunset one summer afternoon, I found myself guided to Airport Boulevard, the busiest highway in my hometown of Mobile, Alabama. There I sat, under a tree, between lanes of cars traveling 40+ miles per hour in my direction. I was sitting in no man's land, and felt extremely overwhelmed. The haunting aroma of sweet and spicy barbecue wafted through the air, as well as the sound of horns being honked at me as drivers yelled out of their windows!

With the intense amount of external stimulation, paired with the gut-squeezing thought that someone I know had likely seen me, I knew I'd found exactly what I was looking for.

My mind was being distracted by a myriad of stimuli, all battling to take my attention away from the tranquility I was experiencing in that moment. As I take a breath and smile, I'm beautifully reminded of a mind that is still.

Learning meditation allowed me to understand that what I'd originally thought of as a disability was actually a byproduct of the modern society we live in. This life-changing realization put an end to my fear of uncomfortable situations and the compulsion to mask my true feelings with drugs. Instead, those uncomfortable feelings I occasionally experience are now met with an open heart long enough to see the beauty in them. Meditation has helped me to find myself again, and it's transformed the stressful situations of life into opportunities for experiencing an epic adventure!

Those crazy, beautiful moments are available for us to experience, even in the most undesirable of circumstances, if we simply remember to take a breath and smile.

BY FORREST NEAL

CORONAPRESSION

WHY YOU'RE DEPRESSED RN (AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT).

It isn't always obvious. Sometimes it feels like everything is awesome, and you hardly notice that it's creeping up on you.

Maybe you like staying home & joining zoom calls with no pants on. Maybe you're really enjoying spending time with your loved ones and thanking the Universe for the opportunity to do so. And yet... after a while... it starts to seep in, this uneasy feeling somewhere deep in your soul. It manifests as anxiety, and depression, and overwhelm, and feeling disconnected from the present moment.

Insidious as a ninja in the dead of night, it tends to sneak in when the future is cloudy.

Having a certain, stable idea of what will happen in the future allows you to make plans, to know what you're doing, and to decide where you're going in life.

But when the future is unclear, we are constantly reassessing, constantly trying to figure out what to do. This keeps the mind in a vague, anxious, confusing future.

When the mind wanders into the future and finds a clear, stable reality there, it's able to integrate it and move on.

If there's a concrete problem visible on the horizon, the mind comes up with concrete solutions and plans to implement them. Then the mind can shift back into the present, newly energized to implement the plans.

If there's something awesome visible in the future, the mind can become excited about it, look forward to it, get hyped... and then, satisfied with its hype level, move back into an energized present moment.

But if it's an uncertain future, the mind gets stuck in future-focus, trying to figure out what's going to happen, and what to do in a thousand possible eventualities. No solution, plan or hype can be formed, to bring back into the present moment... just confusion and doubt, which keeps routing the mind right back to the future.

This breeds a situation where, instead of enjoying the here-and-now, we're living in a cloudy, vague & confusing future. This is where anxiety lives. And where there is anxiety, depression is soon to follow.

Enjoying life in the present moment is the thing that refills our emotional fuel tanks, our Happiness Reserves. When we spend too much time with the mind in the future, not taking enough time to refill the happiness tanks, our joy levels run low, and we dip into depression.

This is what we've been going through here at Meditation Magazine, by the way. We had a home base in Greenwich Village and a fast-growing brand. We were expanding quickly into Canada, and soon Europe and Australia! But 2020 has thrown a monkey wrench in our plans. We've had to leave Manhattan because, you know, Pandemic. Magazine sales in bookstores and groceries are down 30%-50%, which messes up our business model so we lose money on every issue we publish. It's easy to be excited and energized about the future when we had certain release dates; we knew exactly what we needed to do, and when we needed to do it. There was a plan in place so we could operate from the present and let the future take care of itself. But now, with the future of the world economy uncertain and things changing so much from month to month, the plan is constantly changing. We need to keep our minds in the future to continually adjust course. And this leads to anxiety and depression for us here as well!)

The answer to all of this — the solution to the problem of uncertain-future-anxiety-mind-depression — is clear, but it's not always easy to implement. I think you already know where I'm going with this. The solution to Coronapression is to take massive amounts of drugs.*

Alternatively, if you want to get healthier and happier instead of spinning out into a downward spiral, meditation + exercise pack a powerful one-two punch.

Meditation clears the fog of anxiety, and centers you back here in the present moment. It gives you a chance to refill your happiness tanks so that when your mind does end up back in the future, it doesn't feel so dark and depressing anymore.

Exercise releases happy chemicals (dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and stuff), makes you feel good, burns a lot of the energy that would have otherwise gone into anxious thoughts, and generally keeps you grounded in your body. Perhaps even more importantly, consistent exercise makes you more fit and healthy over time (rather than letting yourself go in the other direction), which makes the future look like a happier, healthier, sexier place. It gives you a sense of control over your destiny, and a sense of progress toward a better future. Which in turn helps you let go of anxiety about uncertainty, and remain more grounded in the present moment.

The thing with depression is, it kind of makes you lose motivation to do things that are good for you. It makes

you feel like nothing really matters and that you might as well just "fuck everything," ignore your troubles and binge watch Jane The Virgin - I mean, The Witcher - again. But this type of "numbing" coping mechanism will just lead to the degradation of your life situation, and thus the worsening of your future-anxiety, further accelerating the downward spiral.

At first, the meditation and exercise takes a major act of willpower.

"I NEED TO DO IT. I WILL DO IT NOW."

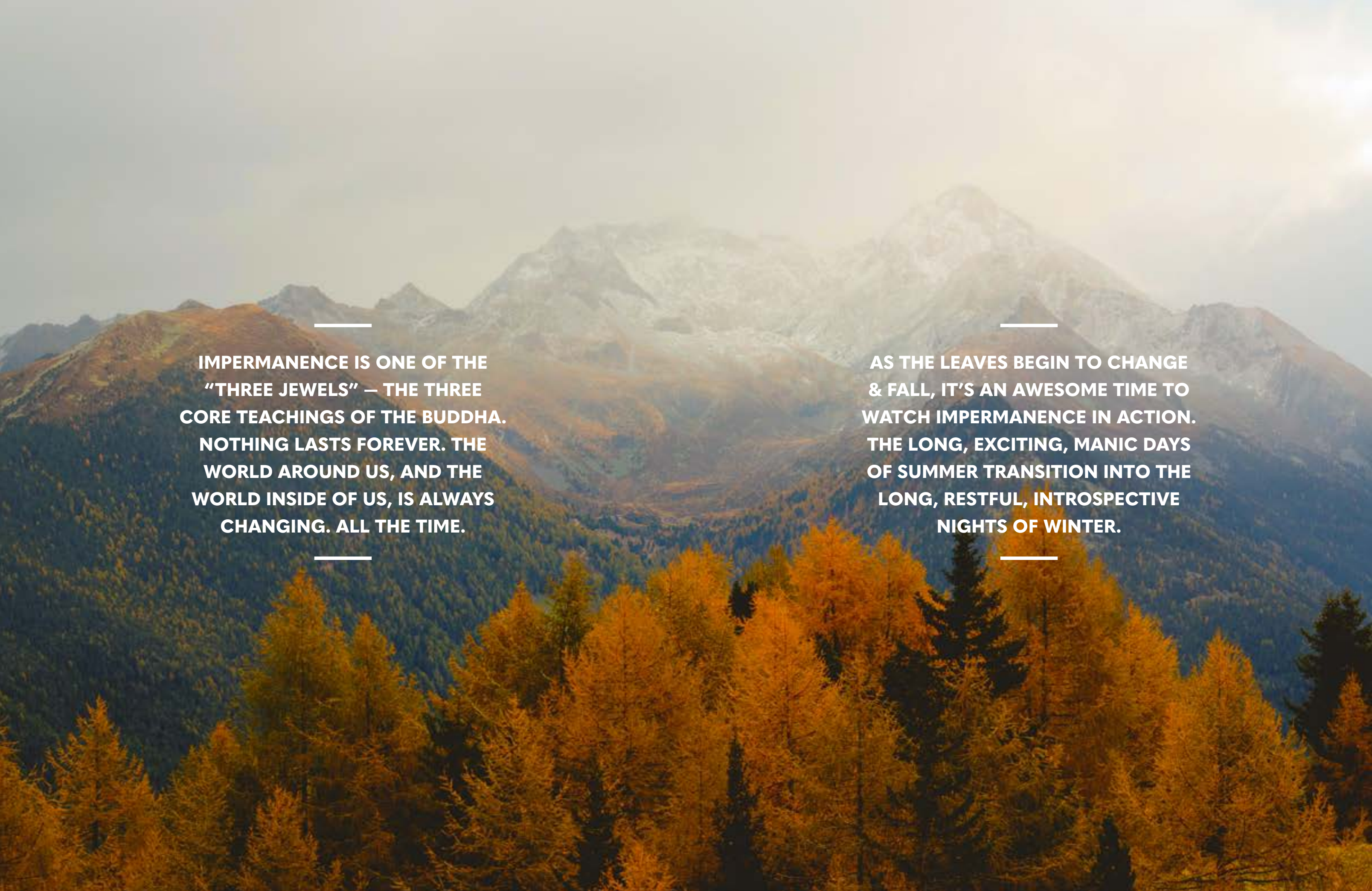
But once you get in the habit of meditating & exercising at the same time every day, it's not so hard anymore. In fact, it becomes a ritual you rely on, to keep you sane, happy and healthy. It becomes the thing in your life that's moving you in the right direction, that gives you that feeling of being in control of your own destiny, that's making the future look brighter and healthier and just a little bit less uncertain every day.

So break out your meditation cushion and your yoga mat, stop reading for a few minutes and do yourself a favor. Cultivate the habits of meditation and exercise. Your happy brain will thank you later

**Legal disclaimer: Drugs are bad, m'kay. Please don't actually take massive amounts of drugs unless prescribed by a medical professional, or if the drugs are super ridiculously dank.*

AUTUMN-WINTER MEDITATIONS





IMPERMANENCE IS ONE OF THE
“THREE JEWELS” — THE THREE
CORE TEACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA.
NOTHING LASTS FOREVER. THE
WORLD AROUND US, AND THE
WORLD INSIDE OF US, IS ALWAYS
CHANGING. ALL THE TIME.

AS THE LEAVES BEGIN TO CHANGE
& FALL, IT’S AN AWESOME TIME TO
WATCH IMPERMANENCE IN ACTION.
THE LONG, EXCITING, MANIC DAYS
OF SUMMER TRANSITION INTO THE
LONG, RESTFUL, INTROSPECTIVE
NIGHTS OF WINTER.

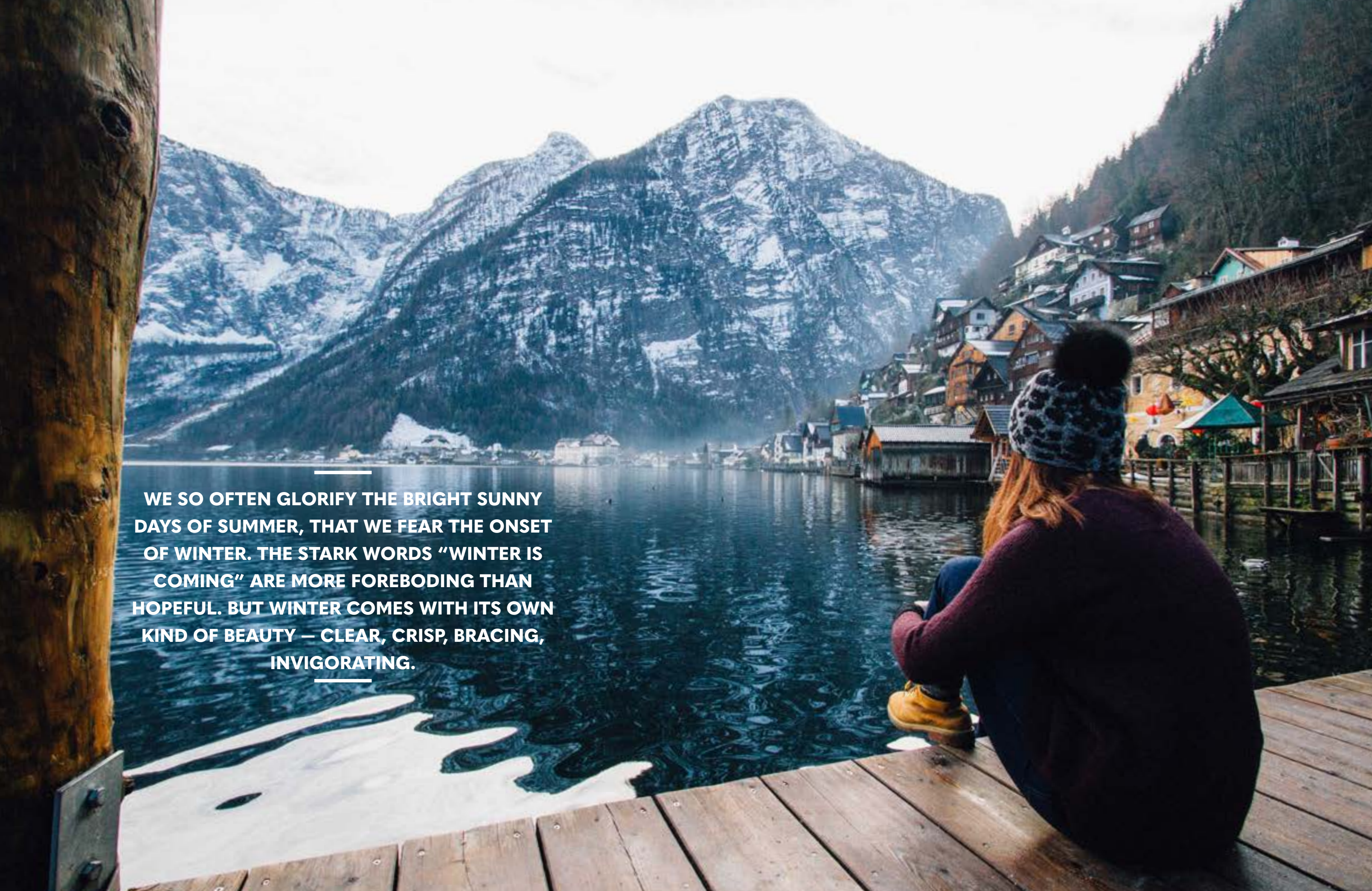
AS THE OUTER
WORLD DARKENS,
THE INNER WORLD
COMES INTO FOCUS.



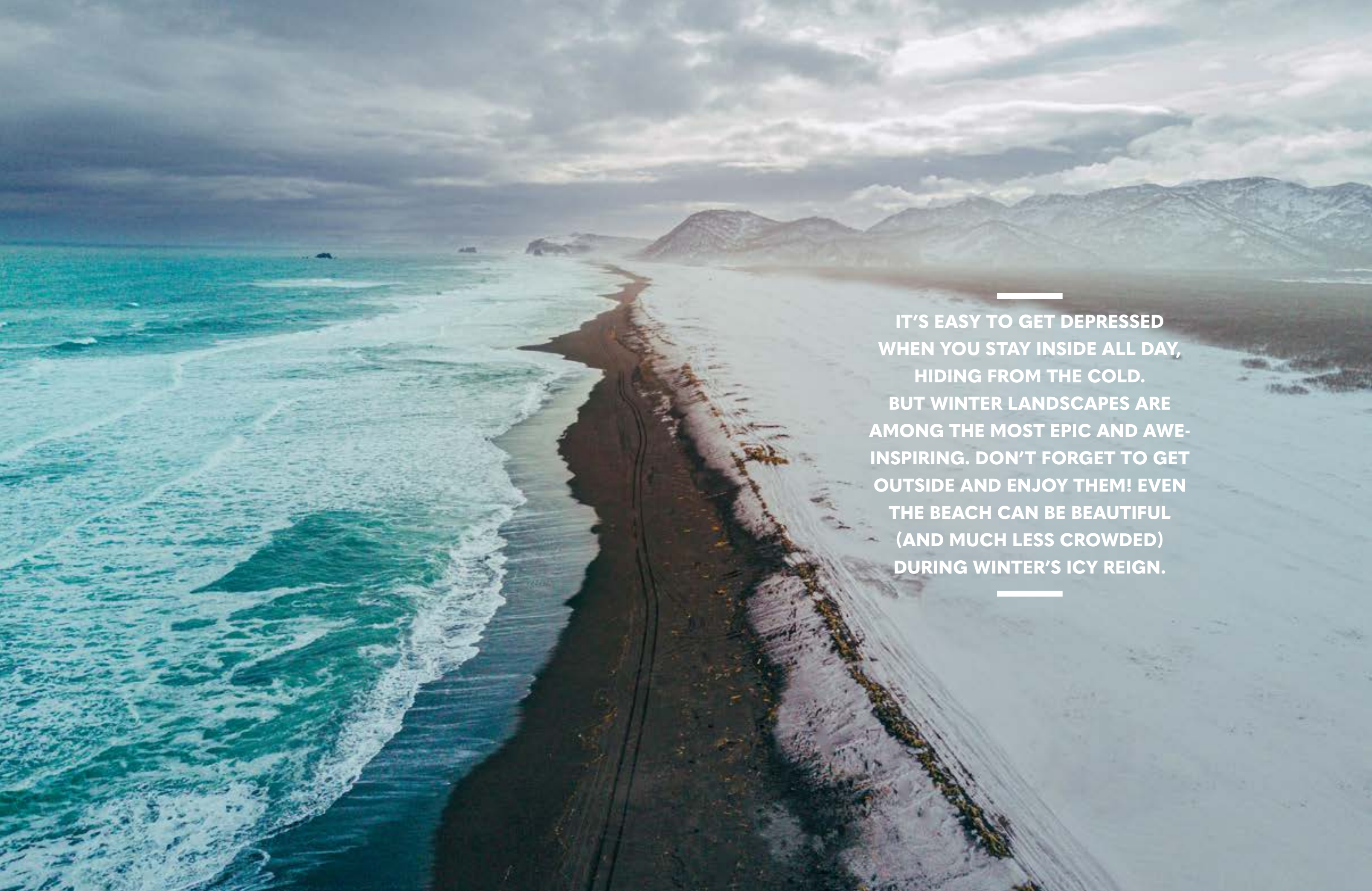
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VEDIC ASTROLOGY READINGS
FROM ASTROLOGYNOW PODCAST RECEIVE COSMIC
GUIDANCE AND CONNECTION TO THE STARS
INNERKNOWING.YOGA

A person with long hair, wearing a dark red sweater, a grey and black patterned beanie with a pom-pom, and yellow boots, is sitting on a wooden dock. They are looking out over a calm body of water towards a small town built on a steep, snow-covered hillside. In the background, there are large, rugged mountains with patches of snow. The sky is overcast. The water reflects the surrounding landscape. A large, weathered wooden post is visible on the left side of the frame.

WE SO OFTEN GLORIFY THE BRIGHT SUNNY
DAYS OF SUMMER, THAT WE FEAR THE ONSET
OF WINTER. THE STARK WORDS “WINTER IS
COMING” ARE MORE FOREBODING THAN
HOPEFUL. BUT WINTER COMES WITH ITS OWN
KIND OF BEAUTY — CLEAR, CRISP, BRACING,
INVIGORATING.



IT'S EASY TO GET DEPRESSED
WHEN YOU STAY INSIDE ALL DAY,
HIDING FROM THE COLD.
BUT WINTER LANDSCAPES ARE
AMONG THE MOST EPIC AND AWE-
INSPIRING. DON'T FORGET TO GET
OUTSIDE AND ENJOY THEM! EVEN
THE BEACH CAN BE BEAUTIFUL
(AND MUCH LESS CROWDED)
DURING WINTER'S ICY REIGN.

MAKIN' CASH & SAVING COWS

WITH JENNY GOLDFARB

"THIS BUSINESS IS A CASH COW. WE'RE MAKING CASH, AND WE'RE SAVING THE COWS."

An ebullient Jenny Goldfarb beamed into the camera after accepting a \$250,000 investment from Mark Cuban on ABC's hit TV show, Shark Tank, for a 10% stake in her plant-based deli business. Cuban himself had recently gone vegetarian - the largest shark to have done so thus far.

Just a few years ago, Jenny was just Mrs. Goldfarb from the block. Far from the dazzling lights of the Shark Tank stage, Jenny was a homemaker, cooking meaty meals for her husband and kids.

But then, she saw the videos, and her life changed forever. You know the videos. In an exclusive interview with Meditation Magazine, Jenny told us how she ended up creating delicious plant-based meats and one of the biggest up-and-coming meat-alternative companies in the country.

"I STARTED SEEING SOME VIDEOS OF ANIMAL CRUELTY."

Now, at the time I was only eating Kosher meat, so I thought that I was living in this sort of 'higher existence' in my food choices. But I had no idea

that on Kosher farms, and on organic farms, and on 'happy farms,' what the realities were like. For the sweetest animals in the world.

These are the sweetest animals that want to bond with us, they want relationships with us, and we of course take the most advantage of them. So it really troubled my soul that I thought I was eating at this higher standard... and truth is, I wasn't.

So I went to my husband, and I said to him, 'I want to go vegetarian.' He was *not* happy. He said 'Alright, I guess if you can make it really taste good...' and then I saw a few more videos about egg farming and dairy farming, which is shockingly even *worse* than meat farming. I went back to him and said 'I want to go vegan!' And he said 'What's that?' I said 'I'm learning as we speak, and I'll get back to you!'

So I wound up learning, very painstakingly, how to cook from the produce and grain section of the grocery store. And there were a lot of really really bad bad meals. But every now and then, some of the meals were good, and better, and Oh-My-God exceptional. And I had so much passion about this that I wanted to take those exceptional meals and make a vegan food blog, to show folks how doable and deli-

cious vegan could be. And it was for that endeavor, that every week I was coming up with a new recipe that I was posting, that I wound up creating this vegan corned beef."

And the rest is history.

MM: That was like, the best Shark Tank appearance ever. It was just 100% positive, go go go go go, investment, done.

JG: I did some serious meditations in the green room for that.

MM: Nice! Did meditation & spirituality influence your decision to create plant-based meats?

JG: Yeah, totally! I grew up, I like to say as a Seinfeld & Bagels Jewish person. No real Judaism, but the sarcasm and the deli was going strong. And when I was in college I got involved in learning about my Jewish roots. It wound up taking me on an amazing spiritual path to living in Jerusalem after college. I went east to Jerusalem and I put on some sandals and I started learning deep Torah, Kaballah, Chasidut, which is so much of the sweet stuff of what Judaism is, and it helped me realize the interconnectedness of this world. Because of this spiritual backbone, as soon as I saw

"TO BE ABLE TO NOT HAVE TO KILL SOMETHING IN ORDER TO EAT -- IT CREATES THIS SORT OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS WITH EACH OTHER."
— Jenny Goldfarb





what was happening [with factory farming], I was like, “This does not work, *how is anyone OK with this?*”

I believe that this is the moment of our time -- to be able to not have to kill something in order to eat something -- I think it creates this sort of interconnectedness with each other. And compassion. It’s all linked to how we treat one another. There are so many movements now: Black Lives Matter, the Me Too movement, and it’s all about this sort of like: one group is trying to oppress others, and we’re trying to rise up and say, “This is not ok anymore!” We’re smashing through these boundaries. And so too with our food system.

MM: Plant-based meats can totally take over - they just need to have enough protein.

JG: We’ve really gone out of our way to ensure that every one of our meats are complete proteins. So you’re really hitting on all the aminos that you need. It’s almost like you’re having a full salad, you’re getting your meat and your veggies at the same time.

MM: I respect what PETA does, but I think it’s hard for them to reach most of the population. People don’t want to hear it. I think the new animal-rights activism is focused on creating meat-alternatives so that people can gradually start to adjust their diets.

JG: It’s really hard for people to swallow that meat is murder, and that they’ve been complicit

in hurting animals all this time. It’s such a heavy thing to sit on someone’s soul. And so what I think is so much easier is to say, “It’s so hard what’s happening to these animals... but I don’t want you to have to watch those videos and go through that. Instead, just have this delicious sandwich and we can call it a day!”

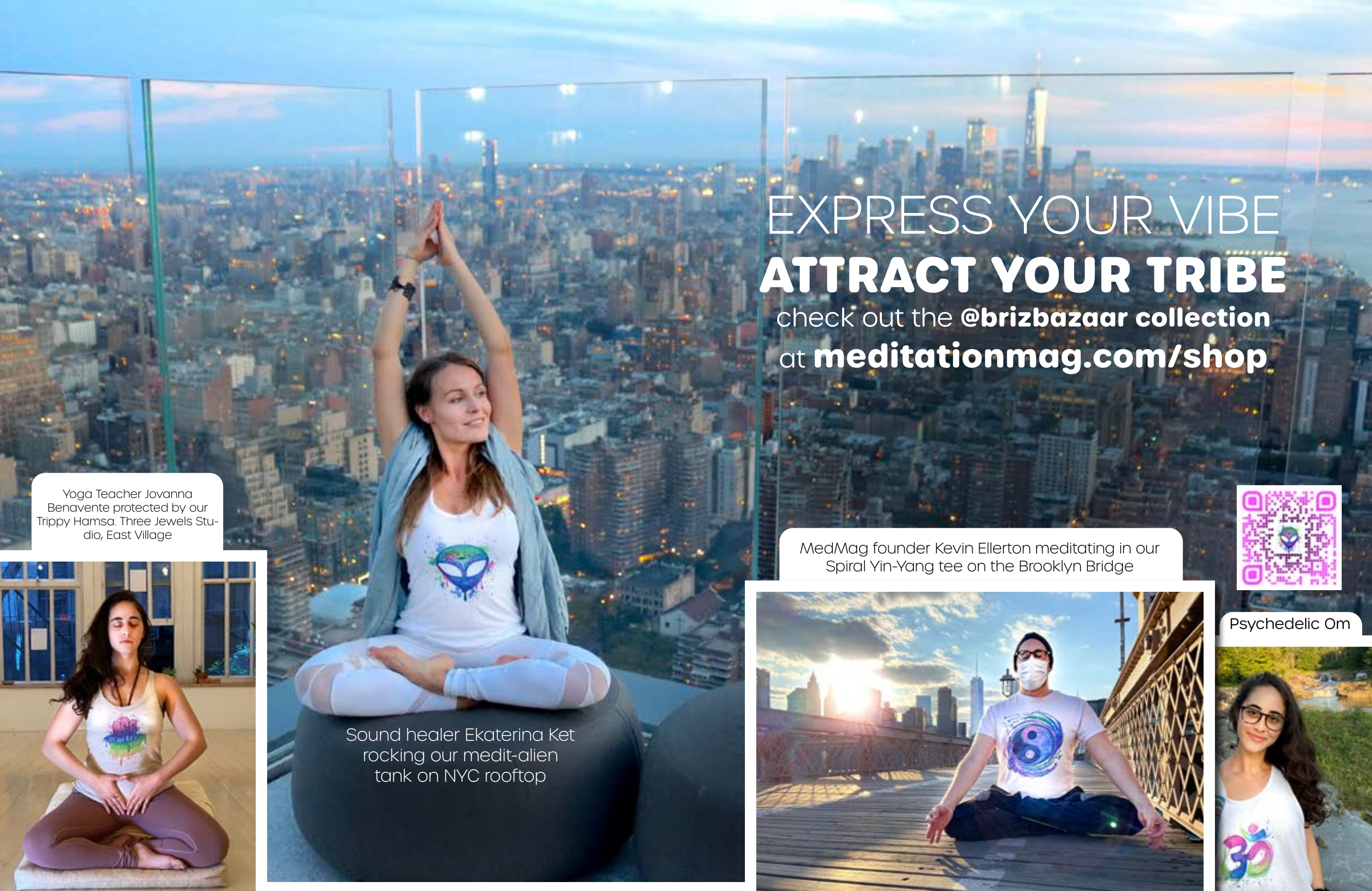
To make it convenient for people... this is the whole movement with Beyond and Impossible. So, we’re here representing the delicatessen line of that.

MM: What’s the future of Unreal Deli?

JG: It was such an exciting start, and Shark Tank and all of this, and then Covid hit! And when Covid hit we were so deep in food service — selling to restaurants — that we were sitting there with all the other restaurants of the world like, “Wait a second, what’s going on?” And we realized that we needed to pivot into retail in order to meet the customers there. So we’ve been quickly coming up with our first retail packaging. So we’re going to be on retail shelves as early as September! We should be nationwide with Whole Foods, Wegmans...

TO WATCH THE FULL
INTERVIEW, CHECK OUT
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Yoga Teacher Jovanna Benavente protected by our Trippy Hamsa. Three Jewels Studio, East Village



Sound healer Ekaterina Ket rocking our medit-alien tank on NYC rooftop



MedMag founder Kevin Ellerton meditating in our Spiral Yin-Yang tee on the Brooklyn Bridge



Psychedelic Om



BY DR. MONISHA VASA

MINDFUL PARENTING IN A PANDEMIC

PARENTING IS CHALLENGING UNDER ROUTINE CIRCUMSTANCES, MUCH LESS DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC. AS WE NAVIGATE THIS TIME OF STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY, BRINGING MINDFULNESS TO HOW WE PARENT CAN SUPPORT THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CHILDREN, AS WELL AS OUR OWN SENSE OF EQUANIMITY. HOW WE MINDFULLY RAISE OUR CHILDREN VARIES BASED ON AGES AND TEMPERAMENTS, AS WELL AS THE PARTICULAR DYNAMICS AND CHALLENGES WITHIN EACH FAMILY. BUT HERE ARE SOME STARTING POINTS THAT WE CAN ALL TRY TO BRING A LITTLE MORE AWARENESS INTO OUR DAILY PARENTING ROUTINES.

BEGIN WITH YOU

It is always helpful to remember that our kids are watching us, and are much more likely to model what we do, rather than what we ask or tell them to do. The more we integrate mindfulness into our own lives, the more our children will take note. This might mean letting your children see you meditate, even if they aren’t meditating with you. Or, it may mean putting away your devices during dinner, and enjoying your meal with full presence of all your senses, while the kids look on. These small moments can be powerful, as our children are always taking note of our behaviors and choices.

CHECK IN WITH FEELINGS

We are all experiencing powerful emotions right now, ranging from fear and sadness, to anger and frustration, to loss and grief, to moments of joy and connection. Mindfulness shows us that we can sit with the entire range of our emotional experience, and fully be with all emotions. We can watch our emo-

tions rise and fall, come and go, without being consumed or overtaken by them.

It can be helpful to set aside time to discuss feelings as a family. This can happen casually during a brief walk, over a meal, or while the kids settle down for bed. If we observe any behavioral changes or persistent mood shifts in our children, it is especially important for us to check in with what emotions they are experiencing, and to let them know you are a safe space for them to share.

SLOW DOWN

As most of us remain mostly at home, or with a significantly altered version of our usual lifestyle, we might find ourselves struggling with a new, slower pace. Perhaps it feels like we aren’t being “productive,” or we miss our usual routines and distractions. That being said, the slower pace of life, if we can settle into it, allows new opportunities for connection during the pandemic. With no sports, carpool, playdates, or with older children back

at home, we can spend time together in new, creative ways. Consider creating time to bake, play games, go for walks or bike rides, watch movies, or whatever activities feel good for your family. Allow these moments to be safe, judgment-free zones where kids feel comfortable simply being themselves. Being fully present and connected with one another, in an open, non-judgmental way, even for a brief moment, is a rare gift to be treasured.

Our mindfulness practices give us the strength and wisdom to meet challenging moments with open-heartedness. It is exactly these types of moments that we have been practicing for, on and off the cushion. Taking steady and consistent steps towards global positive change, begins with presence and kindness towards ourselves and our children. Even small intentional steps towards mindfulness in the home, can change us, our future generations, and the world around us.





THE JOURNEY OF ILLUMINATION

BY SHIV

THE JOURNEY OF ILLUMINATION

BY SHIV

It's summer, 2015. I gaze out over the bridge of the cargo ship at the horizon, where the gray-blue waters of the Gulf of Oman meet the waxing twilight of the dawn. All week I've felt uneasy. Something is just not right in my life. Here I am an officer on a ship, a dream I'd once worked hard to make a reality. Now it seems to have lost all its meaning. I sip my coffee, as the warm, salty air blows through my hair, and watch the massive, orange glow of light burn into the sky.

I've seen many remarkable sunrises at sea, but today's holds a different depth, and I stand there, fixed to it, watching the light swell and lift from the horizon. The morning passes, as I attend to my duties as a Merchant Marine, and it's now noon and something tells me to look at the sun again. I see that its morning beauty has faded into its own brightness. And suddenly, stunned, I feel something deeper move within me. I realize that at dawn, the sun was humble enough for me to bask in its beauty. But now, as the sun climbs higher in the sky, its beauty is blinded by its own, harsh rays. Like the sun, since childhood I wanted to rise up and be something, be accepted by others, but I never was humble and innocent enough in my approach. I look back in my life for answers.

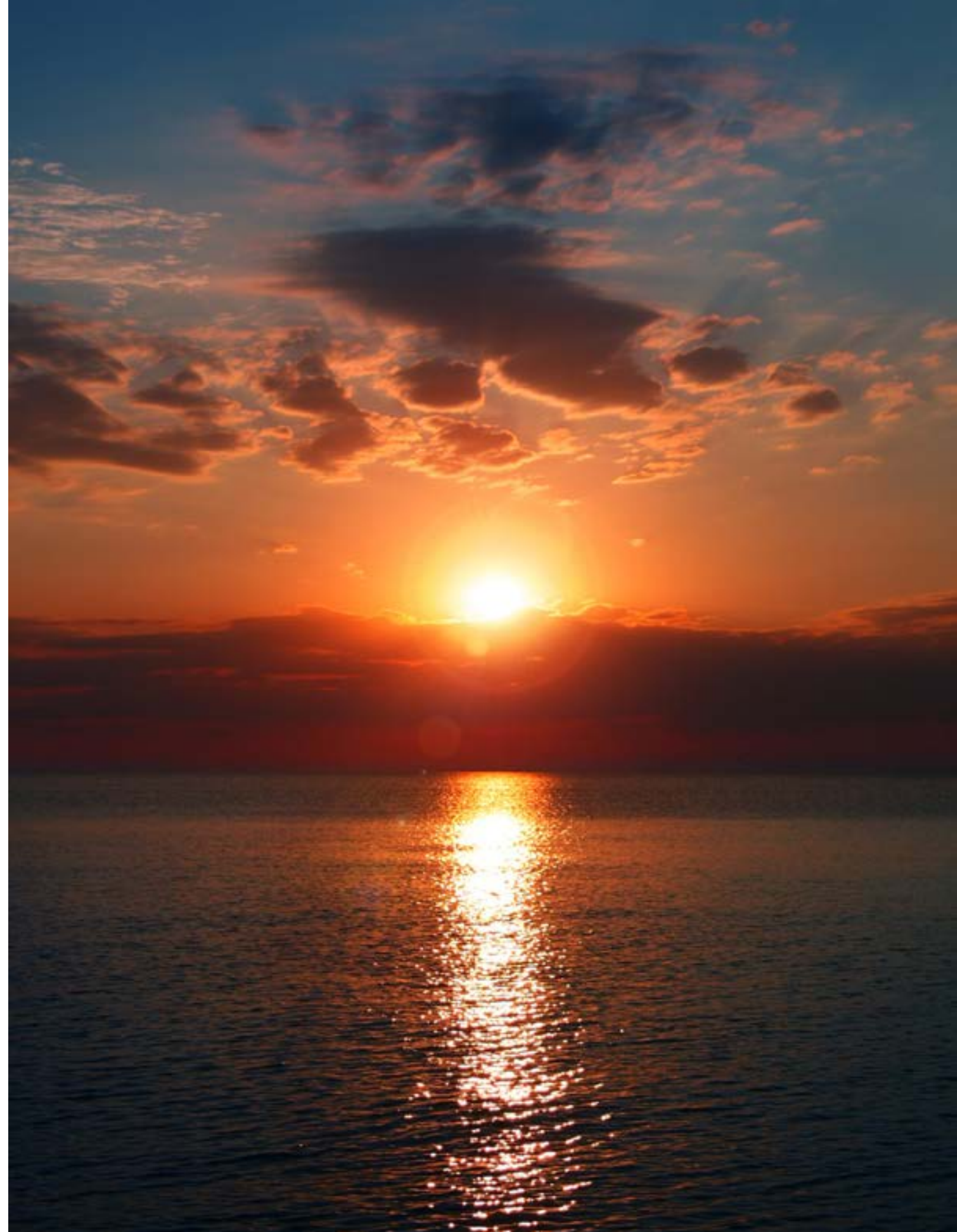
I was born in Amritsar, a small city in India. When I was two years old, my mother had to give me away to her sister, due to financial reasons. From age three, I spent several years in a boarding school for boys, the youngest kid there and often bullied. Then, raised in two families, my mother's and my aunt's, I was left in doubt as to who my real parents were.

Growing up, I struggled with feelings of abandonment, depression, low self-esteem and lots of other emotional problems. My depression grew stronger into my teens, carrying with it thoughts of suicide. I attempted it several times, but failed miserably, like the time I sprayed a whole bottle of deodorant into my mouth, which only left a very bad taste and not much else, except my own suffering. But that was a familiar feeling for me, as I was raised with the belief that suffering is the way of life. After high school, I decided to get away from family and everything else about my sad world, pulled by the adventure of going to sea as a Merchant Marine. I spent the next eight years or more in training and sailing all over the globe on ships. Life as a Merchant Marine is nothing like what's sold to young people. It's hard, emotionless and it kills your soul. For me, I only excelled at being more depressed, with no self-esteem, and rewarded myself with

multiple traumas. All I wanted was to prove my worth to myself through hard work.

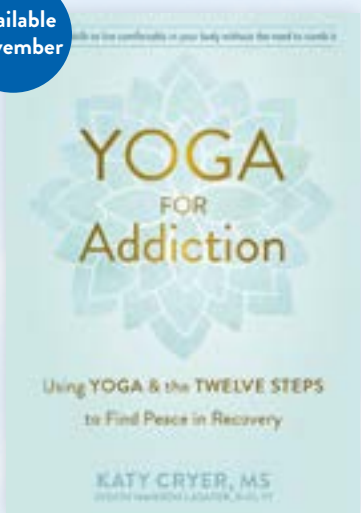
That day on the ship with the sun, I feel that everything is losing its meaning. I return to my cabin in the evening and sit down with my legs crossed, palms on my knees and my eyes closed. I feel so tense, and in the tension I realize something: Tensed is what we want to be and relaxed is what we really are. And suddenly, simply by facing my fears, I relax. I don't know it then that I am opening myself to the depths of meditation and what I have since come to understand as the first stage of it—relaxation. I invest in myself from then on, and spend every evening sitting with myself, facing all my fears and looking within. I have no clue what meditation is. I am nowhere, in the middle of the ocean, with no guidance, no books, no teacher, nothing. I give up my uniform for a white terrycloth robe that I buy at the next port and let my beard grow, rebelling against my former ideologies. The ship captain is kind to let me work, anyway.

Within a few months, I finish my contract with the Merchant Marines and decide never to return to my old self. I jump into the unknown and renounce everything I once knew—family,



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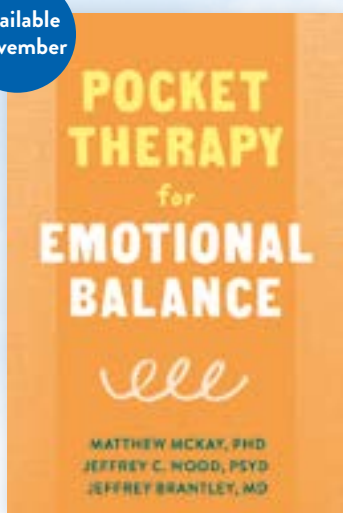


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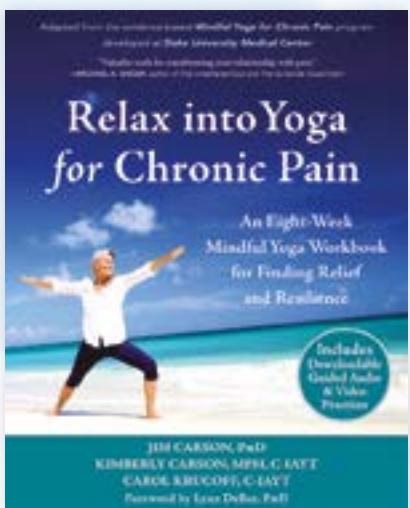


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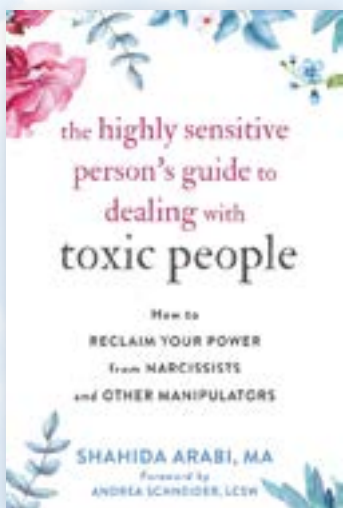
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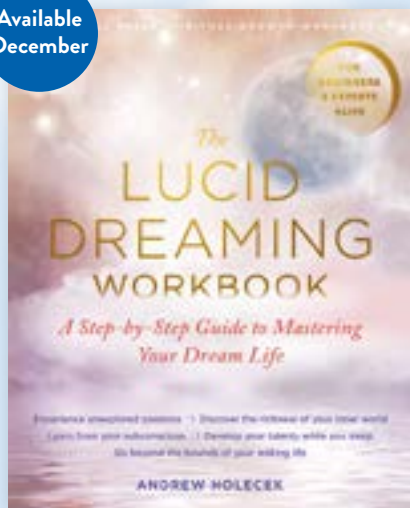


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friends, career. I'm wearing a robe traveling around India by myself, unknowingly exploring the second stage of meditation—observation. I become an observer of life, of the cosmos. I witness every moment that passes, and with it, my thoughts. Gradually, I enter the third state of meditation—silence. Here, language no longer has the same meaning as before.

I am having the time of my life in India with this newness I've found within myself, just watching and being quiet. Hakuna Matata!! I'm at this peak, like the sun at high noon, but once again, something does not feel right. I see it in the people I encounter, struggling being themselves, and I feel an immense love and compassion for them. I decide then that, if my own life has changed because of meditation, helping me overcome my challenges, I'm going to share my insights with others. And this is when I write my first book, on meditation, called *The Seed of Nothingness*.

Here in India writing the book, I am on the path of merging and surrendering into the oneness of the cosmos, immersed in the fourth stage of meditation—creativity. The Universe is always creating in love and joy. A delicate flower is born through love and care of nature so it can give life through more flowers. And it is during my own journey of creativity that I meet my wife and together we build our wonderful life, today blessed with two daughters.

Now in the US, I'm giving lectures on my newly discovered joy of going within, traveling city to city on the West Coast. Still, something is missing; the essence that I want to share is incomplete. I ask myself, "What made me first unleash my joy during my growth process with my meditation?" And then I remember the time I was in Goa, walking on the beach at sunset and I felt this vast joy looking at the sky. I start dancing as if it is my last day on Earth. I don't care what others think, seeing me dancing with no music. As I finish my "cosmic dance," I turn around

and see there are people jumping and dancing with me! Then they smile at me and leave.

In meditation, one may eventually understand the freedom of flow. It is in Goa that I experience this, and the seed is planted for my Dance Meditation Transformation workshops. They take participants through all the stages of meditation, finally to the fifth—celebration. Celebration is the true essence of life, and you reach this only when you experience the other four stages. It requires that you first be responsible for yourself, with self-care and self-love.

Then you can dance freely, celebrating life moment to moment, with the mind unchained from thoughts.

Like dancing with abandon, set yourself loose from what you have heard or known about meditation. Science may have proven that meditation promotes longevity by repairing and extending the telomeres in our chromosomes, and that it can help with anxiety and depression. But what is meditation, itself? Think about where you go when you are asleep.

Your physical body is at rest, while your consciousness floats in the depths of the unknown. As with sleep, meditation is the journey into that unknown. But unlike sleep, it's with the awareness of and awakening to the reality beyond our perception of life.

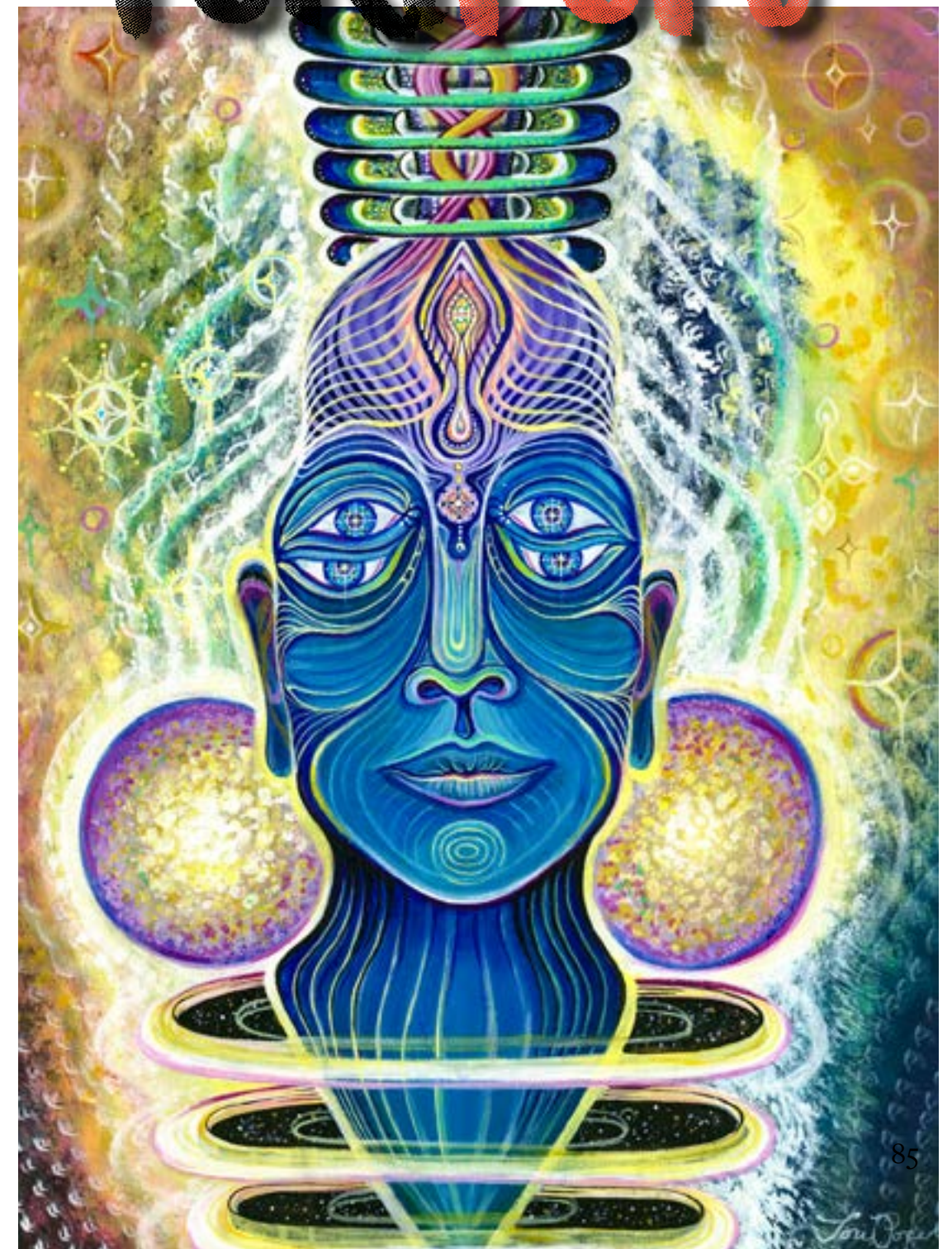
That sailor at sunrise? Little did I know then what awaited me beyond the horizon. It was where I felt most lost—not out at sea, but within myself—that I found myself, in the journey of meditation. I am still traveling. Through relaxation, observation, silence, creativity and celebration, meditation illuminates the path toward the truest, deepest place in yourself, the place that is always there, always ready to show you the way.

BY SHIV | [FACEBOOK.COM/SEEDOFNOTHINGNESS](https://facebook.com/seedofnothingness)



THE
**MEDITATIVE PSYCHEDELIC
VISIONARY ART**
OF

TORI POPE





"MEDITATION CAME INTO MY REALITY AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 13, NOW I AM 26, THEREFORE I HAVE BEEN MEDITATING FOR HALF OF MY LIFE. IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT MEDITATION SAVED MY LIFE, AND HAS CONTINUED TO BE A POWERFUL, GUIDING TOOL THAT HAS GREATLY IMPACTED THE WAY I LIVE. "

Meditation is a vehicle for creative freedom. When we cleanse our channels through practice, we allow our higher selves to express through us.

Most of the artwork I have channeled came to me in a vision while meditating. I also use meditation techniques, such as clearing my mind by focusing on my breath while painting, to keep myself from over analyzing or over thinking each brush stroke. Surrendering to my higher self, letting go of any limiting beliefs and chanting affirming & empowering mantra is another meditative technique I use to create my artwork from a space of Divine trust.



**REBOOT
YOUR BRAIN**
EVERY MORNING
WITH THESE POWERFUL
MEDITATIONS & MINDSETS
THAT REMIND YOU OF
WHAT'S IMPORTANT
IN LIFE.

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While practicing kundalini yoga and meditating on a daily basis staring at the ocean on the magical beaches of Kaua'i, I found out I was pregnant! I was guided to dive deeper and deeper into my meditation practice during my pregnancy and found helpful visualizations and guided practices in a book titled "The Pleiadian Workbook."

I began meditating for hours a day in preparation for my all natural, free birth in our home. These practices worked, and when I went into labor I dropped deep into a meditative state and experienced a pain free, blissful birth to my son.





**"WHEN WE GO WITHIN AND
GIVE LOVE TO OURSELVES
BY TAKING THE TIME OUT OF
OUR DAY TO REALLY SIT AND
APPRECIATE THE GIFT OF EACH
BREATH, WE GIVE PERMISSION
TO THE WORLD AROUND US TO
DO THE SAME. PEACE BEGINS
WITHIN. INNER PEACE IS WORLD
PEACE."**

**"I HAVE COME TO THE
REALIZATION THAT THE DIVINE
IS LIVING THROUGH ME AND AS
ME. I AM THE CREATOR OF MY
OWN REALITY AND THE MORE
LOVE I GIVE TO MYSELF, THE
MORE LOVE I SEE REFLECTED
EXTERNALLY IN THE WORLD."**

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BY MARK VAN BUREN

5 MEDITATIVE TIPS TO SURVIVE THE CORONAPOCALYPSE

1 Attention! Bring complete attention to your body and mind in this moment. If you're not paying attention then you may be taken over by unhealthy, unhelpful thoughts and emotions flowing through your heart and mind. Worries, fears, frustrations, and anxieties will come and go during these crazy times. This is totally normal! But if you aren't careful, they can wreak havoc. Paying attention allows you to relate to these experiences objectively, rather than wallowing in them.

2 Acceptance. Meditation practice is about being with reality, just the way it is. If you haven't noticed by now, life usually doesn't follow your way, but rather tends to follow its own. When reality hands you a difficult situation, you still have a choice. You can fight, freeze, or flow.

Meditation practice is about learning to flow with life as it is, in order to create the least amount of suffering. As we sit in meditation we are making a radical statement with our entire being, that says, "I am willing to be here no matter what. I want to be with my life as it is." What life is presenting in this moment is simply the facts of reality. What's the use resisting what's already present? This may be a difficult time for you. Let it be just that, a difficult time. Accepting it will not necessarily improve the situation, but it will help you let go of a ton of unnecessary suffering that can make this feel a hell of a lot worse.

3 Impermanence. Although the coronavirus may be here for quite some time, this too will soon become a memory. As Zen Master Suzuki Roshi once taught, "When

you realize the truth that everything changes and find your composure in it, you find yourself in Nirvana." This is what meditation is all about. And remember, your practice is not limited to a cushion or chair, but fully expressed in how you relate to every part of your life. Pandemics are part of being human, and now it's our time to experience it. We have gone through them before, and we will get through it this time. This too shall pass!

4 Curiosity. During the pandemic things may start to bubble up, especially if you're spending a lot more time alone, or with your family or partner than you're used to. There are only so many TV shows or movies we can watch to distract ourselves! Time without distraction can lead the unfinished business of the heart to come up and

be known and expressed. The best thing to do is become curious about what arises, and how you are relating to it. Curiosity comes from a mind that doesn't know, the not-knowing mind. It doesn't solidify your moods or emotions, but rather allows them to be there with a sense of acceptance and investigation. You may think you know your anxiety, or what is causing you to be so impatient with your partner, but do you really? Have you ever looked? Have you ever allowed yourself to fully feel what you're feeling when things get uncomfortable? What is really going on? As you become more curious, you become more willing to stay, rather than immediately running off. You may find your inner and outer life turning into more of an adventure than a task. When you get triggered, rather than just habitually reacting, you may find yourself asking, "Oh, what is this? Why am I getting so upset? Is this true?" Curiosity allows for just enough space to become free or deeply ingrained habits and reactions. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but for you, it can be liberating!

5 Compassionate Action. My last tip for surviving the Coronapocalypse is to remember that there are others going through the same thing (or worse!). We are all in this together. Our practice is always incomplete if it focuses solely on ourselves. Ask yourself: "How can I use this day to be of benefit to others?" For me, it's been calling those who I know are alone, or offering to pick things up from the store for those who are high risk. Other days it may be joking around with someone at work to brighten their day. For others I may need to offer compassionate listening to their heartache, frustration or pain. Caring for others is not only an essential part of the practice, but it is also an unlimited source of joy. The more you help others the more joy you feel, and during these times, who doesn't want more joy? Use everything as your path to awakening and as a way to help others. Keep in mind that how you relate to the painful scary parts of yourself is how you'll relate to painful scary things when you see them out in the world. That means that even if you're alone without anyone around, how you live your life, and how you relate to your

own thoughts and emotions, is either helping the world, or making it crazier.

So for today pay close attention to your thoughts and emotions, and accept whatever it is that is presenting itself in your life. Remember that no matter what you're experiencing, good or bad, it will pass. With curiosity you can become more willing to look honestly and openly at your difficulties, and perhaps, find the possibility of freedom, even amongst the most difficult of circumstances. Most importantly, find out what you can do to help others. It may be as simple as smiling at a stranger, or calling a friend.

The world needs your practice. Any tiny amount of peace, kindness, compassion, tolerance or joy you can add to it is beautiful and well appreciated.

MAY YOU BE SAFE AND HEALTHY DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES. MAY YOUR HEART GROW IN WISDOM AND COMPASSION. MAY YOU BE FREE FROM ALL PAIN AND SORROW.



LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

(METTA MEDITATION)

AN EXCERPT FROM MEDITATION MASTERCLASS, BY KEVIN ELLERTON (NOW AVAILABLE ON AMAZON)

ART BY @BRIZBAZAAR

Loving Kindness Meditation, also known as Compassion Meditation, or, in Sanskrit, Metta Meditation, is all about opening the heart.

Most meditations are mind-oriented, consciousness-oriented, and, if we're honest with ourselves, a bit self-centered. They're all about your experience, your perception, your sensations.

That's why nearly every meditative tradition has at least one meditation dedicated to generating love, empathy, compassion, and loving-kindness. Practicing generating these things in your nervous system actually builds the neural connections that are responsible for those states, and thus reinforces them, raising the baseline level of love that you generate in daily life.

The Harvard Study of Adult Development is the longest-running longitudinal study in the history of humanity. It started in 1938, during the great depression. Harvard researchers started tracking the lives of several hundred

Harvard students. In 80+ years since it started, they've added hundreds more to the study as well. People in the study ranged from inner-city youth to one-percenters, including a U.S. President (JFK). The researchers were looking for traits in young people that would predict their happiness, health, and longevity throughout life.

The study found that the single most important factor for life-long happiness, health, and longevity is the warmth of your relationships. It's not the type of relationships you have (gay vs straight vs married vs single vs poly vs swingle), not the amount of money in your bank accounts, not how attractive you are (or how hot your partner is)... just the warmth of your relationships. Essentially, the key to lifelong happiness and longevity is the warmth of your own heart.

Metta meditation is all about warming your heart, and connecting it with the hearts of others. It's simply the practice of generating love.

So let's get to it.

TIPS & TRICKS BEFORE YOU BEGIN!

Ideally, you should practice Metta Meditation after another meditation. It is best when you come into the meditation filled with joy, happiness, bliss, or ecstasy, because those emotions are a great lead-in to love. When you're happy, you want to share that happiness. When you're miserable, anxious, or overwhelmed, it can be hard to access states like empathy and compassion.

If you aren't able to feel empathy and compassion for the enemy, try someone who is less of an enemy, and work your way up to the harder ones.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR BODY

You can practice metta meditation in any position, but sitting (lotus or zen-style) is ideal.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR MIND

There are many forms and types of compassion meditation. In this one, we'll practice generating empathy, compassion, and love for four people:

- **YOURSELF**
- **A LOVED ONE**
- **AN ACQUAINTANCE**
- **AN ENEMY**

And then we'll practice radiating that love outward, to all conscious beings in the Universe.

GUIDED MEDITATION

Close your eyes, and think about some suffering you have in your life. Concentrate on the part of your heart where you feel empathy (understanding how you feel) and compassion (wanting yourself to feel better). Now, in your mind, take a few moments to direct goodwill toward yourself. Repeat this phrase in your mind, a few times, until you can really feel it:

MAY I BE HAPPY.
MAY I BE WELL.
MAY I BE SAFE.

Now, do the same for a loved one. Think about some suffering that person may have in his or her life. Imagine how it feels for that person (empathy). Feel the place in your heart that wants this person to feel better (compassion). And repeat the phrase for this person as well, a few times in your head, until you can really feel it:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY.
MAY YOU BE WELL.
MAY YOU BE SAFE.

Now, do the same for an acquaintance, someone you barely know, who you've seen somewhere, or see occasionally. Think about some suffering that person may have in his or her life.

Imagine how it feels for that person (empathy). Feel the place in your heart that wants this person to feel better (compassion). And repeat the phrase for this person as well, a few times in your head, until you can really feel it:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY.
MAY YOU BE WELL.
MAY YOU BE SAFE.

Now, do the same for an enemy, someone you hate, or someone who annoys you. Think about some suffering that person may have in his or her life. Imagine how it feels for that person (empathy). Feel the place in your heart that wants this person to feel better (compassion). And repeat the phrase for this person as well, a few times in your head, until you can really feel it:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY.
MAY YOU BE WELL.
MAY YOU BE SAFE.

Lastly, expand the love that you feel in your heart to all conscious beings, on this Planet, in all galaxies, Universes and dimensions.

MAY YOU BE HAPPY.
MAY YOU BE WELL.
MAY YOU BE SAFE.

To mix it up a little bit, let's end this Buddhist Metta Bhavana meditation with an ancient Hindu mantra:

Om lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu. In all locations, all conscious beings, happy, rejoicing, together as one; may it be so!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: How can I feel love for someone I hate?

A: Love and hatred are both emotions that arise in any given moment. In one moment you may generate hatred, and in another moment, you may generate love. Nothing outside of yourself can force you to generate either one of these, or any other emotion. Your emotions are generated internally. You may have a habit of generating hatred whenever you think of a particular person. You can change that habit by practicing this type of meditation, where you think of the person, and intentionally generate love.

Q: Why should I love someone who is evil?

A: "Evil" is a judgment of the mind. We are all humans (or, I suppose, you could theoretically hate an "evil" non-human animal). We are all born, and we all die. Most of us are just doing the best we can. Even people who cause great harm, pain, and suffering in others are often just doing what they think is right. And even those that act selfishly, causing suffering for their own gain without conscience, are either wired that way from birth, or are suffering intensely from something that you may not see, that is causing them to act that way. Anyway, it doesn't matter, and there's no reason to make excuses for other people. Your hatred won't cause that person to become a better person. It won't do anything other than burn inside you, causing you to become a more hateful person. You can't control others, but you can control yourself. There's an old saying: Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intention of throwing it at someone. You're the one who gets burned.



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