

MEDITATIONS · VEGAN RECIPES · INTERVIEWS · LOVE · HAPPINESS · WISDOM · THE UNIVERSE

MEDITATION

THE **GURU** ISSUE

7

**DELICIOUS
AYUR-VEGAN
RECIPES TO
ENJOY AT
HOME!**

INSIDE:

DEEPAK CHOPRA
GRAHAM HANCOCK
SAHARA ROSE
**MEDITATION
TUTORIALS
& MORE!**

US \$7.99
CAN \$9.99
UK £6.99
AUS \$16.50
NZ \$17.60

Printed In The USA Spring & Summer 2021



SADHGURU'S EPIC ADVENTURE

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW ABOUT HIS
9,477 MILE U.S. MOTORCYCLE TOUR

ONE OF TWO COLLECTIBLE COVERS!



EVERYTHING YOU NEED
TO STAY CONSISTENT WITH YOUR MEDITATION PRACTICE



ANYTIME. ANYWHERE.

Daily Live Classes
On Demand Library
Livestream Workshops
Resources + Community

ONE MONTH FREE TRIAL! USE CODE

BEXMEDITATIONMAG

info@betimepractice.com

you.betimepractice.com

IG : @betimepractice

THE GURU ISSUE

4

Letter From
The Editor

5

Thank You

6

How to Meditate

12

What Is A Guru?

20

7 Chakra Soups

28

Who is Deepak
Chopra?

40

Kabaka Pyramid

46

Ana Netanel

52

Sadhguru

70

Nature

80

Graham Hancock

88

United States of
Consciousness

89

The Politics of Ego

90

Growing up with Gurus

94

Our Top 23 Gurus

Contact Us

If you have questions, comments, suggestions, or just want to connect,
DM us on Insta or Facebook, or email us at hello@meditationmag.com.

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Meditation Magazine. For permission requests, contact the hello@meditationmag.com.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not representative of anybody's anything. They are just ephemeral thought-forms arising from (and dissolving back into) the fabric of Existence, like wisps of cloud in a clear blue sky. Nobody really knows anything. We are all just tiny organisms on a ball of rock hurtling through space. Don't take words too seriously, just enjoy the reading, and then relax back into the infinity of the Universe.

MEDITATION

FOUNDER & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

KEVIN ELLERTON
kevin@meditationmag.com

SENIOR EDITOR

JOVANNA BENAVENTE
jovanna@meditationmag.com

ART DIRECTOR

MARY WATSON

ADVERTISER OUTREACH

JOVANNA BENAVENTE

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

JOSH RAHMANI, EBI KHALILI

WEB DEVELOPER

CHRIS PETREVSKY

ARTICLES & INTERVIEWS

SAHARA ROSE, ANKITA SONTAKKE, JOVANNA BENAVENTE, KEVIN ELLERTON, KABAKA PYRAMID, FORREST NEAL, ANA NETANEL, LAURA HOF, SADHGURU, DEEPAK CHOPRA, GRAHAM HANCOCK, MALLIKA CHOPRA, MARK WATTS

YOUTUBER

FORREST NEAL

ART, GRAPHICS & DESIGN

ROSSINA MENDEZ, YAR YEMTSOV, NIKOLA STOJANOVSKI, JOHNNY BENAVENTE, JAY-ART SADJAIL

COVER PHOTOS

ROBERT DEUTSCH, LUKAS KLOEPPPEL, ISHA FOUNDATION

ISSUE 04

THE GURU ISSUE (SPRING & SUMMER 2021)
meditationmag.com

PUBLISHED BY

MEDITATION MAGAZINE LLC
531 ACCESS ROAD, WEST HEMPSTEAD, NY 11552

PRINTED BY

LANE PRESS, 87 MEADOWLAND DRIVE, SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT 05403, USA

CONNECT WITH US!

 @THEMEDITATIONMAGAZINE

 @MEDITATIONMAG  @MEDITATIONMAG

SUBSCRIBE

MEDITATION MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED TWO TIMES PER YEAR (CHANGING TO 4X PER YEAR IN 2022)

To subscribe or send a subscription as a gift, please visit meditationmag.com/subscribe. To order past issues, please visit meditationmag.com/issues

PRINT SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$15 PER YEAR, PLUS APPLICABLE TAXES. PRICES & POSTAGE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRINTING
BY LANE PRESS



Please recycle this mag
by gifting it to a friend!

LETTERS FROM THE EDITORS

By Kevin Ellerton & Jovanna Benavente

Thank you all so much for the outpouring of love after we published our last issue. We received emails and messages from dozens of people, asking about Jovanna, how she’s doing, if she’s OK.

I feel relieved and joyful to tell you that after the first trimester, everything settled down. Jovanna is happier and healthier (and hungrier!) than ever, and the baby seems to be doing fine. By the time this issue hits shelves, if all goes to plan, our little baby girl will be days away from drawing her first breaths of fresh air in the outside world.

And yet, even with everything going great right now, as Jovanna’s belly grows bigger and rounder, another kind of anxiety seeps into my heart.

Pregnancy is a scary time. So many things can go wrong. There’s a 95% chance that “everything will be ok,” but still... what if?

The anxiety gnaws at me when I think about what could happen. So whenever those thoughts arise, I ignore them, push them away, and say with a cheerful tone, “***I can’t wait*** for the baby to be born!”

But beneath that hopeful mask of excitement, it’s always there, bubbling up, the gnawing anxiety:

I can’t wait to have my daughter safely in my arms, where I can hold her and protect her and make sure she’s ok. In my daily meditations I’ve begun to

realize, first of all, that “I can’t wait” is actually an expression of anxiety... and second, that my worries won’t be over when the baby is born. Then I’ll be worrying about the baby. And then I’ll be worrying about the child. And then the teenager. And then the adult, and the grandchildren.

Many parents feel this anxiety for their entire lives. Constantly worrying about their children.

“Is this what life is going to be like from now on?” The answer I get from most parents is “Yep. Welcome to the club.” It’s like a fucked up rite of passage. “Congratulations, now you have anxiety foreverrrr!”

What a prospect! To be anxious about your kids’ wellbeing until they’re old enough for you to die. I don’t really like that idea.

So I thought, “How do I let go of this anxiety?”

I sat to meditate on this question, and the answer came immediately:

“You need to accept the possibility... that...” I can’t even finish the sentence. But you get the picture.

Anxiety arises in the space between aversion & desire.

When you are so attached to one outcome that you can’t even acknowledge the possibility of another... that’s a recipe for deep, unconscious, existential dread.

The way out of this type of anxiety is to take a step back from your desires and emotions, get a big picture view of reality, and acknowledge all the possibilities that the future may bring.

Yes, there’s that one narrative you keep repeating to yourself, as if to will it into existence: “She will be healthy, she will grow up, she will have her own babies...” Yes. That is one possibility.

But there are infinite other possibilities as well - paths into the future that could defy our hopes and expectations, at any point along the timeline.

Confronting that fully - looking out upon those other paths, from the peaceful vantage point of meditation - one can see with equanimity all the beautiful and terrible and bittersweet potentialities inherent in the human experience, this thing called “life.”

And once we come to terms with, and accept with equanimity, all the possibilities — realizing that they are all part of the play of Existence, and that no matter what happens, no matter where we find ourselves, life goes on — we can finally let go of the anxiety.

You can still love and protect your children without being anxious all the time.

Are all parents doomed to feel anxious for their entire lives? Well, I guess I can’t say for sure, as I’m still waiting for this baby to pop out. But I can tell you this: I feel a lot better now, having allowed myself to acknowledge the worst case scenarios, and realized that no matter what happens, life will go on. Somewhere in this Universe, someone will experience joy. And even if the Universe implodes, or dissipates into the vastness of space, more life will inevitably arise out of the infinite void... as we have.

So whenever you find yourself suffering from deep anxiety, or even existential dread, ask yourself the question, openly and with equanimity, with a commitment to really accept and be at peace with the possibilities: “What’s the worst that can happen?”

And meditate on that.

Below right: Kevin & Jovi full of hope and anxiety at the beginning of pregnancy.

[UNIVERSE], grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

- Reinhold Niebuhr



THE GRATITUDES Thank you!

Thank you so much for buying this magazine.

As a young and growing company, every sale makes us stronger, and helps us move forward toward our goal of world meditation.

Thanks to readers like you, we have gone from a small local publication in New York in 2018, to a global magazine on shelves in thousands of stores, across 20+ countries around the world. All in under three years.

At Meditation Magazine, our mission is to amplify the impact of meditation on our species, our civilization, and our planet. We aim to make meditation fun and accessible to all people, of all ages, around the world.

We hope to bring more love, light, happiness, and enlightenment into your life, and we are always here for you if you need us.

Please feel free to DM us on Facebook or Insta if you need anything at all!

Sincerely, and with unconditional love,

The Meditation Magazine Team

START
HERE

Be here now

1

You are here,
reading a magazine.

2

Forget the past
and future.
Bring your attention fully
into the present
moment.

PAST



FUTURE



3

Be in your body

Here in this moment,
notice all the
feelings in your body.
Close your eyes and go
deeper in. What does
it feel like to be in your
body in this moment?

4

Did you notice
the sensations
in your hands?
Take a moment
to notice them now.



5

What about your elbows?
Shoulders? Back? Legs? Take a
moment to become aware
of the entire body.



Relax & Smile

Don't worry if there's stress or tension or discomfort or pain in your body. Just experience it all, with a smile. This is called Equanimity, or "non-judgmental awareness." We can't always control our circumstances, but we can control how we respond to them. We can't always control how we feel, but we can control *how we feel about how we feel*.

LEARN TO MEDITATE IN 15 MIN OR LESS!

Come to your senses

10

Take a moment of full sensory awareness now... from head to toe... including all the senses. What a beautiful moment of being alive! What a beautiful world! Try walking around like this.

9

Take a moment now to close your eyes and experience the senses of smell and taste.

8

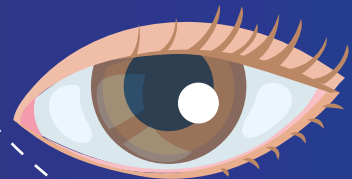
Take a moment to experience the sensations of your eardrums. Notice the sounds moving in and out of the infinite silence that contains and underlies all sound. Close your eyes to go deeper into the sound.

7

Take a moment now to appreciate your sense of sight. See these words on the page. But also see the paper behind them. Widen your field of view to include the magazine, your hands, and everything that your eyes can see in this moment. Even if you close your eyes, you can see the orange light passing through your eyelids.

6

Notice the sensations in your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. These sensations of sight, sound, smell, and taste are different from the sensations in the rest of your body, aren't they? Take a moment to fully experience these senses now.



TAKE THE **MEDITATION MASTERCLASS**
FROM **MEDMAG FOUNDER KEVIN ELLERTON!**
meditationmag.com/masterclass



VEDIC ASTROLOGY READINGS

CHRISTINE RODRIGUEZ IS THE HOST OF ASTROLOGYNOW PODCAST AND IS NOW OFFERING INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS. A READING WILL OFFER INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING INTO YOUR MAP OF THE STARS - INCLUDING INFORMATION ON RELATIONSHIPS, CAREER, HEALTH, KARMA, AND PATH IN LIFE. A READING WILL BRING AWARENESS INTO THE PAST, PRESENT, AND WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE FUTURE.

INNERKNOWING.YOGA



11

Find a comfortable, quiet spot. Sit down in full sensory awareness. Center your awareness around the sensations in your nostrils as the air flows in and out.

Find your center



12

Continue to observe the sensations in the nostrils as the air flows in and out. You can still be aware of the rest of the senses at the same time, while staying centered in the sensations of breathing in your nostrils. Set a timer for five minutes, to sit still, silently, with closed eyes. Stay centered in the breath.

13

When thoughts arise, don't follow them, but don't ignore them either. Treat them like any other sensation. Let them come and go like clouds in the sky. Stay centered in your breathing and aware of all the senses.

14

Thought trains can derail your meditation and pull you away from the here and now.

The trick is simple: don't get on the trains. Let them pass on by.

And if you happen to find yourself on a train to who-knows-where,

just smile and jump out the window, back into full sensory awareness.

15

Every time you come back to the breath, you are diving deeper into meditation. The mind will naturally wander. That's OK! Just bring it back with a smile. After a while, the mind will settle down, and you will observe the breath flowing in and out, in a deep state of concentration. This is called "samadhi."



18

Your life is here, in the present moment. Keep coming back to the sensory awareness. You only live once, right? Experience it fully!

17

If meditation was just a technique for relaxing while sitting on a cushion, nobody would bother. That's what Netflix is for. **Meditation is a state of being** that you can bring with you in daily life. When you go to work, or drive, or talk to someone, just stay centered in the breathing, in full sensory awareness. See how that feels.

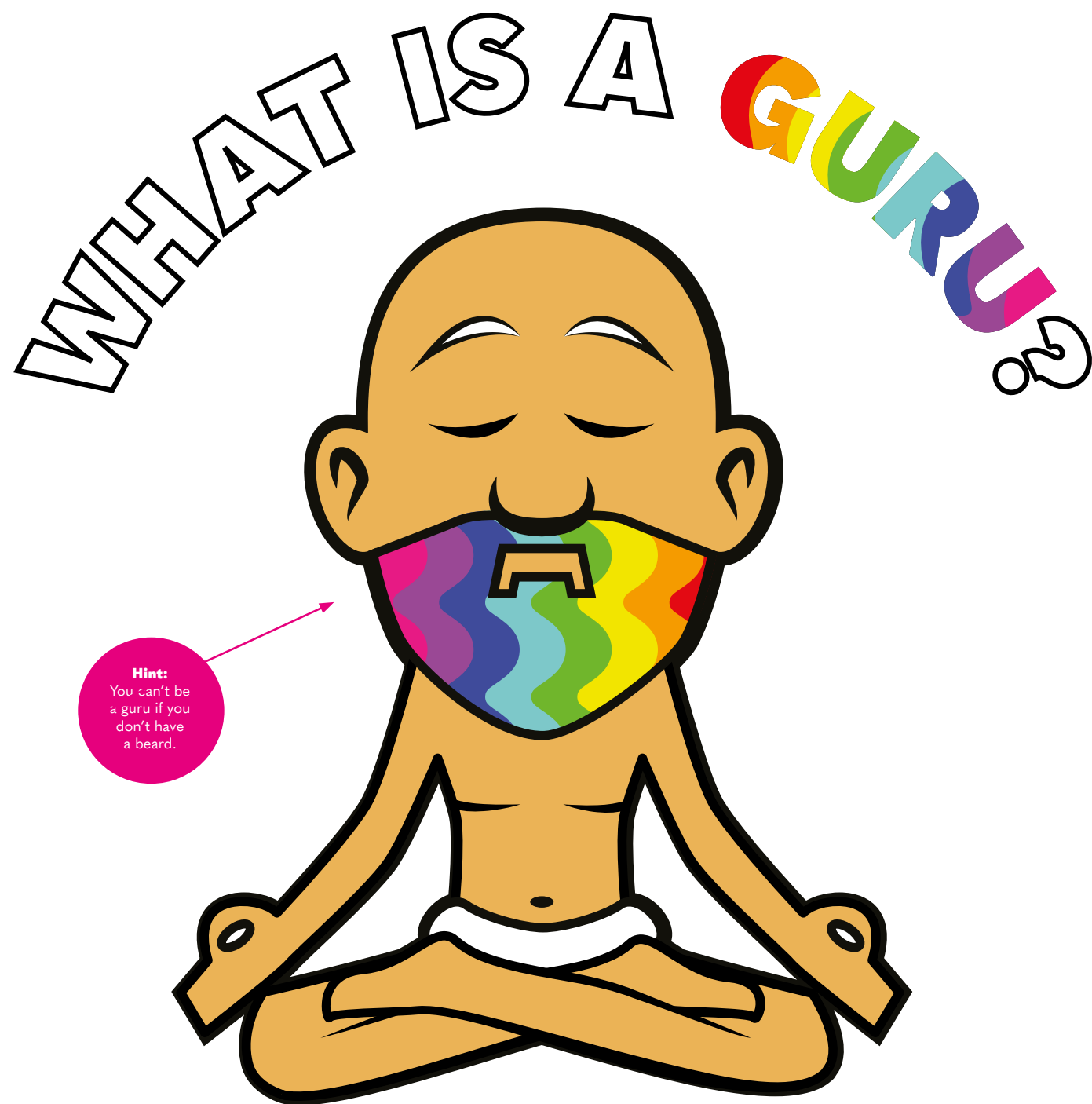
It's still now

19

This is the first moment of the rest of your life.

Here you are, reading a magazine.





**What makes a Guru... a Guru? Was Osho a real Guru, or was he a charlatan?
What qualifies or disqualifies a Guru? Read on and find out!**

Opinion by Kevin Ellerton. Illustration by Rossina Mendez

How can you tell if a person IS a Guru... or is NOT a guru?

How can you tell if someone is Enlightened, Awakened, a fraud, quack, charlatan, or cult leader?

Was Osho a Guru? What about Alan Watts, Ram Dass, Neem Karoli Baba, Sadhguru, Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, or Amma?

What qualifies or disqualifies someone from being a Guru? Who does one need to sleep with to become a Guru around here?

Oh boy. We're about to open a big ol' can of worms. Are you ready? Let's goooo!

There once lived a human named Osho.
Some thought he was a guru, fo'sho.
But he promulgated sex.
And he wore a Rolex.
And the world decided he was a no-no.

Alright so poetry is not my strong suit. Let's try something more prosaic:

What Qualifies, or Disqualifies, a Guru?

Alan Watts was one of the greatest spiritual communicators of the 20th Century. If you've ever heard his words mixed into a YouTube video, you know what I'm talking about. But he drank a lot of alcohol and had controversial affairs, and ended up dying from alcohol-related problems.

OK so... not a Guru?

Siddhartha Gautama has the epic distinction of being called "The Buddha." He went out to meditate in the forest and ended up originating one of the largest and most beautiful spiritual traditions on Earth. But, in his quest for personal enlightenment, he abandoned his wife and child, leaving them with sadness, heartache, and the loss of a husband and father.

OK so... not a Guru?

But wait... how can The Buddha Himself not be a Guru? Isn't he, like... *The* Guru?

What Does The Word Guru Even Mean?

Let's take a step back and consider the meaning and etymology of the word "Guru" itself.

The syllable gu means darkness (or ignorance), the syllable ru, he who dispels them. Because of the power to dispel darkness (or ignorance), the guru is thus named.
-- Advayataraka Upanishad, Verse 16

Well then! I can definitively say, every human mentioned above has played some part in dispelling darkness and ignorance for me, in my own life. So, they are all Gu-rus to me!

Does that mean that these humans are perfect and infallible, eternally enlightened, loved by all, despised by none, always doing the absolute "right" thing, never falling prey to human emotions or even - gasp - "immoral" vices? Of course not!

Black-And-White Thinking: The Infallible Guru

When I was a wee lad, my parents sent me to Jew school.

There was a lot of talk of "real prophets" vs. "false prophets." Jesus, of course, got tossed into the "false" category. And that was that. Jesus is bad, m'kay? No need to hear any of his teachings. Let's move on to Joshua, shall we?

We were taught that the Rabbis knew more than we did, and that if we disagreed with them, it was because they were right and we were wrong.

In history class, we learned about how Catholics used to consider popes to be "infallible."

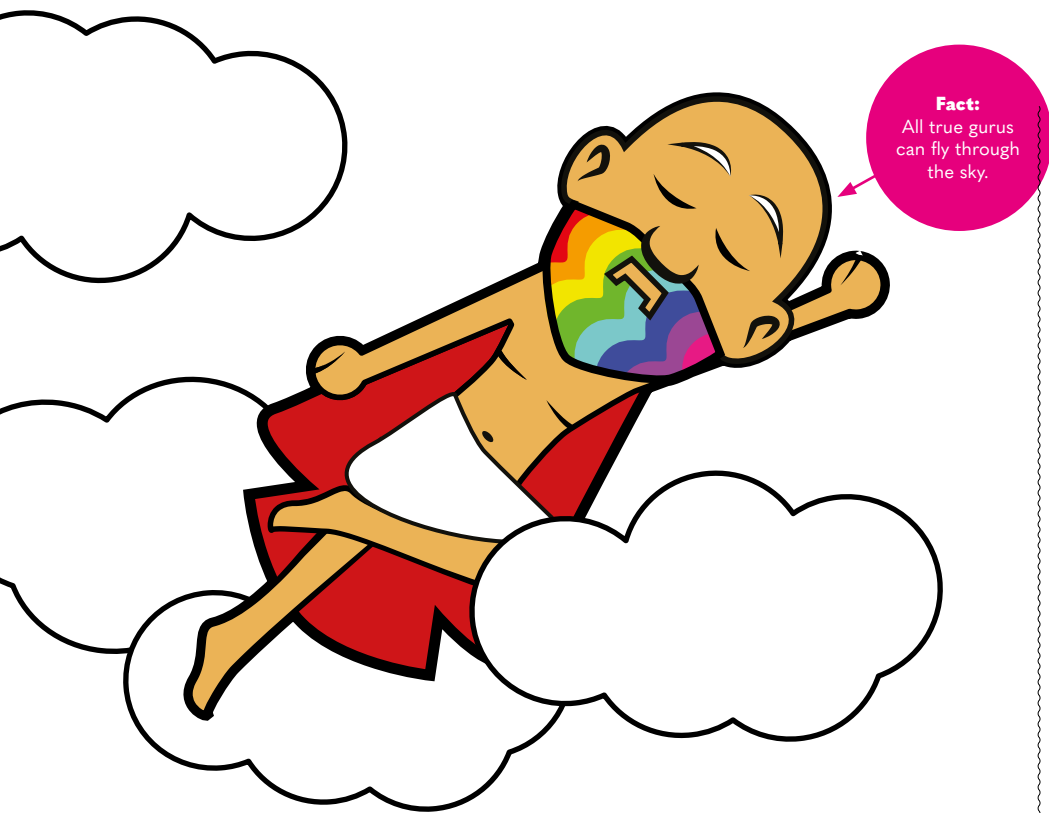
Naturally, the same type of idealized black-and-white thinking tends to arise around "Gurus."

The Guru Reality

The story usually goes something like this:

Somehow, somewhere, someone "becomes" a "Guru." She rises to prominence in one community or another. People start calling her a "Guru." She is a Guru! It is known. And you'd better not say any different, or you're an unenlightened simpleton.

After some time, people from surrounding regions hear whispers of this great new Guru. They come to hear her teachings, and spread word of the "Guru" to their friends and



family. And so the Guru label radiates outward into the larger culture & civilization.

After rising to prominence, the Guru wields a huge amount of newfound power. What will she do with this power? Well, she's a Guru... so she will only use it for good, kind, Enlightened, selfless purposes. Right?

The answer is... well, sometimes, apparently.

Amma is a great example of a guru who seems to have truly gone the selfless route for her entire life (so far). When I stayed at Amma's Ashram in Amritapuri, India, I was struck by her selflessness. I've never met, in person, another human being with that much worldly power, connected that deeply to Source, with that much selfless love for all living beings. As far as I can tell, she

is truly a paragon of love, empathy, and compassion. Aside from hugging tens of millions of people, she has channeled millions of dollars of cash and massive amounts of volunteer hours into helping the people who need it most - victims of hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, and other natural disasters around the world - while living a simple aesthetic life in a small apartment in her Ashram.

On the other hand, if you google the words "controversial guru," you'll find dozens (or hundreds) of news articles about "Gurus" who went the other way with it. In some cases, the "Guru" uses his newfound power to gain wealth and/or sexual gratification. In darker cases, there is violence, rape, murder... on various scales.

So... does this mean that Gurus are bad? Of course not!

Gurus are *humans*... just like you, me, and Bill Nye The Science Guy.

Gurus As Humans

Now, I know that this may be a controversial concept. Outlandish. Heretical even. But I would like to propose a novel new theory. Don't worry, it's not very long. In fact, it's just four simple words:

All. Humans. Are. Humans.

Now, I know this sounds totally insane, but hear me out. What if all those Rabbis, and Priests, and Imams, and Gurus, are actually just - wait for it - *humans*... who have been granted special labels and statuses by the people around them? What if those labels and statuses are not actually an inherent part of the essence of their recipients, but rather, originate in the minds of those who grant them?

In that case, well... all the questions from the beginning of this article answer themselves.

Q: How can you tell if a person is a real Guru?

A: If you consider her a Guru, she's a Guru to you!

Q: Was Osho a real Guru?

A: Depends on who you ask!

Q: What qualifies or disqualifies someone from being a Guru?

A: These criteria are up to you!

Did The Buddha believe that Gurus are eternally Enlightened Superhumans?

From what I've observed in my 35 years on Earth, it seems to me that all humans flow through various cognitive and emotional states throughout their lives. I believe that the Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, would have agreed with this assessment as well.

At the core of Buddhist teachings are the Three Marks of Existence: Dukkha (imperfection or unsatisfactoriness), Anicca (impermanence), and Anatta (no-self). The Buddha taught that these characteristics apply to all of existence, and to all beings. He said that being deluded about any of these three things is *literally* the root of suffering.

So... if everything in the Universe is imperfect and unsatisfactory, how could there be "perfect" gurus? If everything in the Universe is impermanent, how could there be a "permanent" state of awakening or enlightenment?

I learned Theravada Buddhist meditation at Wat Suan Mokkh in the jungles of southern Thailand. The monks taught meditation straight out of the Anapanasati Sutta, the Buddha's original teachings on meditation. A big part of the teaching was: anicca, anicca, anicca.

Yes, you may feel anxiety now, but it will pass. Yes, you may have thoughts now, but they will pass. Yes, you may feel Awakened now... but it will pass.

If you become attached to anything - including "Awakened" or "Enlightened" states of consciousness - you will fall back into suffering. Because everything in the Universe is impermanent. Even states of consciousness. Even Enlightenment.

If you think that something, or some one, is perfect and completely satisfactory, then you are in for some dukkha-pointment.

If you believe that something (like an Awakened state of consciousness) is permanent and will last forever, then you're going to have to struggle to continuously reconcile this belief as the world keeps changing, the galaxy keeps spinning, matter and energy keep shifting in their configurations, the Universe continues to evolve, and the winds of time shape and reshape everything in their path.

Gurus as Role Models

Instead of wondering about whether a person is "perfect" or "enlightened" enough to be a "real Guru," I prefer the "Guru as Role Model" paradigm.

In my travels in India, I spoke with many people about what the word "Guru" means in their culture. A Guru is more than just a teacher. A teacher is someone who conveys knowledge through words. A Guru, on the other hand, is someone who lights the way with his or her being. Words can be helpful, but actions speak louder.

At Amma's Ashram, I finally began to understand what this means. She

doesn't speak English, yet thousands of westerners flock to her Ashram. She doesn't need to say anything; she just gives hugs. She doesn't need to give any teachings, when all her actions are for the good of humanity. And it is easy to see in her face that she does not feel like she's carrying a burden, or being a martyr - she seems deeply connected to the Oneness of The Universe, and thoroughly enjoying Existence.

From what I've heard, it seems likely that Neem Karoli Baba and many other humans throughout the millennia have existed in a similar fashion.

Does this mean Amma, Neem Karoli Baba, and others like them, are super-human, and that normal humans are incapable of this type of personality, behavior and experience?

If so, what is Guru-hood even accomplishing? What's the point of celebrating and spending time with Gurus, if not to absorb some of their presence, love, wisdom, energy... and to evolve over time to become more like them?

Maybe some people were just born that way... but that doesn't mean that "normal people" can't decide to grow and evolve in that direction, and develop similar personality traits, behaviors and experiences in ourselves.

That's why I like the paradigm of Gurus as Role Models. Gurus can show us beautiful ways that humans can exist in this world, provide us with a vision for how we want to be, and give us the motivation to make it happen.



Think For Yourself Instead of Following Blindly

Humans are social creatures. When we look at other humans, the mirror neurons in our brains literally mirror their cognitive & emotional states. We can't help but learn from, and be affected by, everyone around us. It's not even intentional - it's biological.

Most sane humans don't want to learn indiscriminately from everyone, taking on the attributes of the murderer as eagerly as the aspects of the saint. We strive to take "the good" from everyone we encounter. We hold a semi-permeable barrier around our consciousness, like a mosquito net, letting in the things that we want to incorporate into ourselves, and keeping out the mosquitoes.

If we put a human on a pedestal and consider her to be "higher" than ourselves, we let down our semi-permeable barrier. We don't see any mosquitoes at first glance - the air is clear! So we take down the net. But this is a dangerous position to be in.

Humans are humans. Some may be more awakened, more enlightened in certain ways... but there are always

mosquitoes. Many people learned this lesson through Osho, and hundreds of other gurus in the past couple of centuries alone.

The idea that one person is "perfect" or "infallible" encourages you to drop your semi-permeable barrier, to let go of your judgement, and to blindly follow. You start absorbing everything from this person, indiscriminately, without thinking about it, without even keeping track of the things that you're absorbing.

And then what happens when you inevitably find out that this human is actually, surprise surprise, a human, who is occasionally subject to human emotions, and flaws? Well, we've seen what happens. People freak the F out. "OMG, what poison have I been absorbing for all these years?"

Cancelled!



Monty Python's "The Life of Brian"

The love turns to hatred, the devotion to disgust, the admiration to disdain, and people turn, viciously and mercilessly, against the Guru. Instead of an Enlightened Guru he is now an Evil Charlatan.

Imagine if this was your pattern in romantic relationships. What would your therapist say?

If you go through life with the theory that "all humans are humans," you don't end up in this situation (with Gurus or with romantic partners).

*I'm not looking for somebody
With some superhuman gifts,
Some superhero,
Some fairytale bliss...
I want something just like this.
-- Chris Martin*

From The Mouth Of The Buddha

"Don't blindly believe what I say.

"Don't believe me because others convince you of my words.

"Don't believe anything you see, read, or hear from others, whether of authority, religious teachers or texts.

"Don't rely on logic alone, nor speculation.

"Don't infer or be deceived by appearances.

"Do not give up your authority and follow blindly the will of others.

"This way will lead to only delusion.

"Find out for yourself what is truth, what is real."

— The Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, in the Kalama Sutta

When You Know How To Listen, Everyone Is The Guru

Reverence for a Guru can be a beautiful and worthwhile thing... when the Guru is embodying, representing, and pointing the way back to The One from which she arises... rather than aggrandizing her egoic self.

It can be a powerful practice to revere all humans as expressions of The

One — as beautiful manifestations of nature. Like the cloud, the oak, and the majestic moose.

Ram Dass famously said, "When you know how to listen, everybody is the guru." We are all expressions of The One, the Universe, Existence. We are all "God in Drag."

But when people revere a specific individual in an ego-oriented, hierarchical way — like, "this person will always be higher than me, better than me, wiser than me, more Enlightened than me" — this can become a problem for everyone involved.

Idolization Hurts Everyone

The whole idea that some people are above others and some are below is a harmful concept. It leads to self esteem and insecurity issues in all parties involved.

People who see themselves as "low" on the totem pole feel like they can never live up to their own ideals. After all, who am I, this lowly human, to live up to an ideal? I could never do that. I'm not a Guru!

This type of thinking becomes a habitual excuse to wallow in the muck of unhealthy, unhappy, less-than-ideal patterns of thought, behavior, and consciousness.

Even people who think that they are "high" on the totem pole end up feeling insecure. "What if I'm not really high? What if I'm actually low?"

You see this insecurity a lot in models, celebrities, and even Gurus who take their status seriously - who believe that there is such a thing as "higher" and "lower" when it comes to human beings. This is the root of Impostor Syndrome. People who are respected, admired, and revered often feel like impostors, running on a hamster wheel, always needing to maintain their perfection, and their idolized, idealized status.

The worshippers place the Guru on a precarious pedestal, constructed from ephemeral wisps of thought, ego, and mind-stuff. The Guru who climbs onto the pedestal is now doomed to spend his life in a balancing act, projecting perfection all the time in order to remain a "Guru." For if he should show any human "flaw," he would fall to his doom.

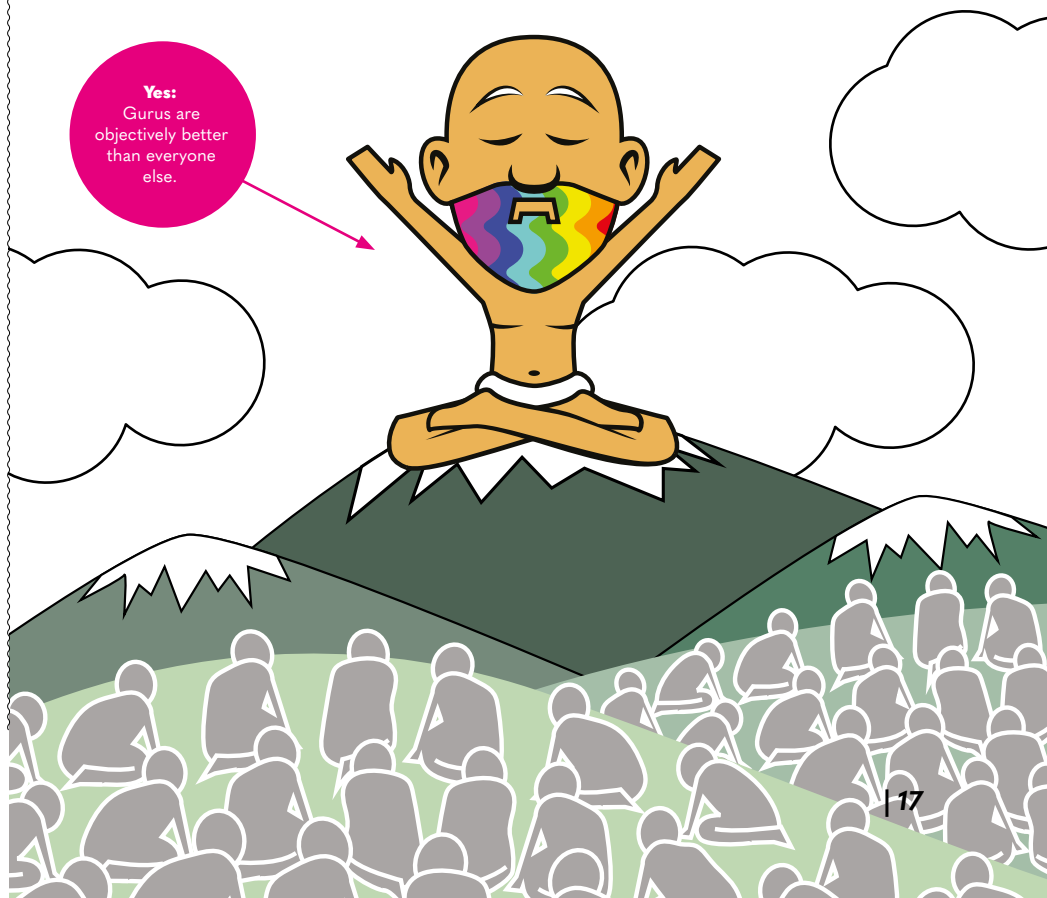
Alan Watts recognized the Worship Trap, and shunned the term "Guru,"

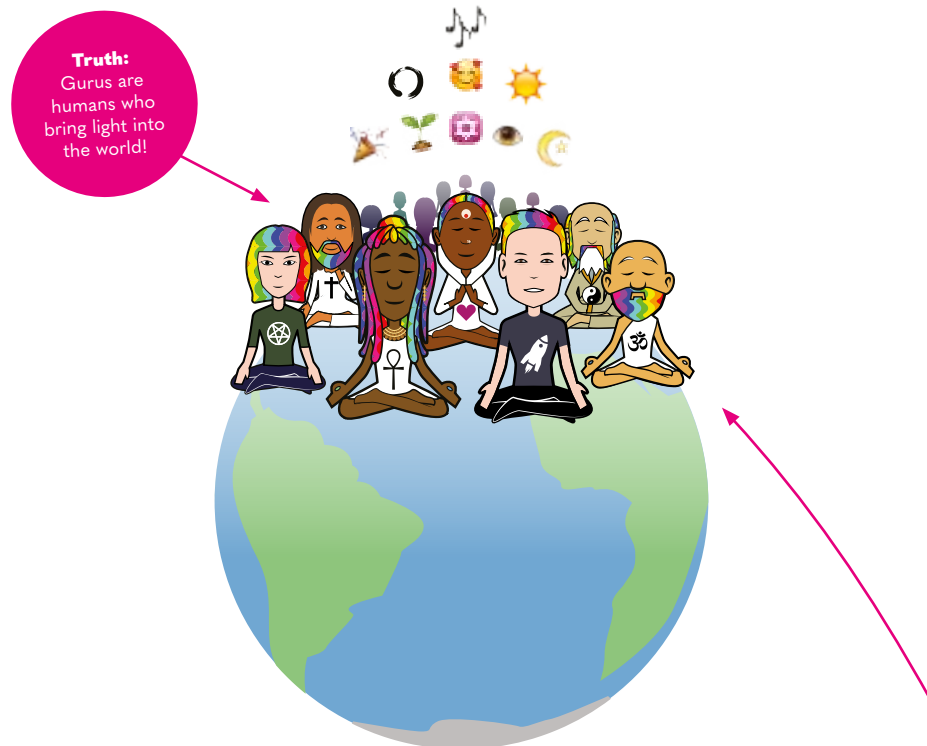
preferring to be known instead as a "philosophical entertainer."

Idealization & unrealistic expectation does a disservice to Gurus and spiritual leaders. It makes them feel like they can't be human beings. Imagine how Eckhart Tolle feels, in moments when he's experiencing anxiety, or moments when he gets lost in, or accidentally identifies with, thought forms? If one of his worshippers were to observe him in that state, what would they think? Would they call him a hypocrite? Would the whole world find out that he was -gasp- a human? What would happen to his life's work?

Imagine being in that position... the Hell of having to be Perfect all the time!

Pop culture celebs experience this as well. Many feel like they need to wear four pounds of makeup to go to the





supermarket. They worry about making a wrong move in the spotlight, because the millions of people who hold them to a super-human standard will turn on them, mercilessly and without compassion. After all, why bother to treat them like humans if they're super-human?

And then people wonder why celebs have such high rates of drug overdoses & suicide.

The Big Picture

If you realize that we are all just tiny organisms on a speck of dust spinning through space in an infinite multiverse... just like the ants and the monkeys and the bacteria and the chihuahuas... it becomes kind of comical to think of "better" and "worse," "higher" and "lower" humans.

Even the wisest ant has no idea that the world extends beyond the borders

of the backyard. What do any of us really know about anything, anyway?

A New Model: Guruhood 2.0

Rachel Brathen does a great job of providing spiritual leadership while remaining real, honest, flawed, vulnerable, and most importantly, human. I consider her to be one of my personal Gu-rus, dispelling the darkness of spiritual perfectionism that had been weighing down my soul.

The same goes for humans like Dax Shepard and Kristen Bell, on the celebrity side. They're all about being real, vulnerable, open and honest and just letting it all hang out. And you know what's crazy? People seem to respect them, and like them, and love them even more for it. Because they're relatable & real. The ideals that they represent are attainable realities, rather than impossible perfection.

This movement is growing now in the celebrity world, to be real and raw and open and honest... to be unapologetically human. I believe we are beginning to see a similar movement among spiritual leaders, and other world leaders as well... and I look forward to the day when people think of Gurus as beautiful, flawed, wonderful humans rather than perfect idealized super-humans.

In Conclusion

TLDR: Don't get stressed out trying to figure out if someone is a "real guru." Just remember, humans are humans.

Instead of picking gurus apart for what they do "wrong," let's celebrate them for the beautiful things they bring into this world!

And if you happen to meet someone who is actually super-human, who is completely selfless, eternally Enlightened and Awakened, please introduce me! Sincerely: I would love to meet her.

And please, dear reader, remember that this is all just my opinion, based on my experiences in life. Please feel free to argue with me, enlighten me... tweet me @kevinellerton

Kevin has been traveling around the world, interviewing Gurus about Awakening and Enlightenment since 2013.



THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM A SUPER RIDICULOUSLY LONG ARTICLE THAT JUST DID NOT FIT IN THE MAG AT ALL. TO READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE, SEE MEDITATIONMAG.COM/SOCIETY/GURU OR SCAN THIS QR CODE W YOUR PHONE CAM



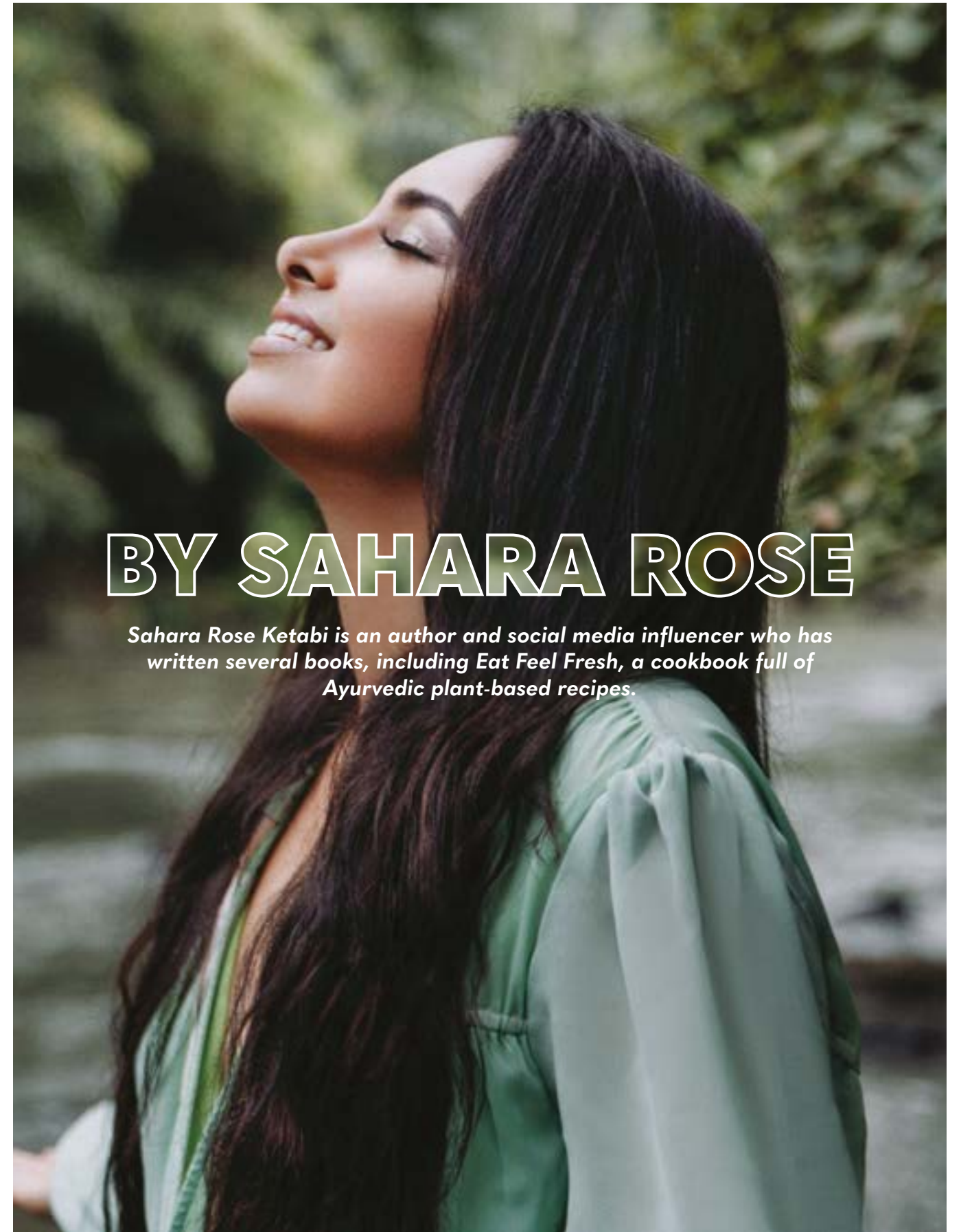
INDULGENT.
CHOCOLATE.
SUPERFOOD.
CACAO BLISS.

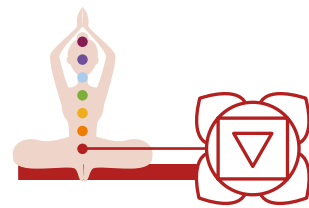


CHAKRA SOUPS

BY SAHARA ROSE

Sahara Rose Ketabi is an author and social media influencer who has written several books, including Eat Feel Fresh, a cookbook full of Ayurvedic plant-based recipes.





Muladhara Root Chakra

Thai Red Curry Coconut Squash Soup | Serves 4

Ingredients

- ☐ 2 tbsp coconut oil or olive oil
- ☐ 1 medium yellow onion or fennel bulb, chopped
- ☐ 4 garlic cloves, minced (option to reduce or omit for Pitta)
- ☐ 2–3 tbsp vegan Thai red curry paste (option to omit for Pitta)
- ☐ 2 tsp ground coriander
- ☐ 1 tsp ground cumin
- ☐ ¼ tsp sea salt
- ☐ ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (omit for Pitta)
- ☐ 2lb butternut or kabocha squash, peeled, seeded and cut into ½-in pieces (about 3 cups)
- ☐ 4 cups vegetable broth
- ☐ 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- ☐ ½ cup full-fat coconut milk, to serve
- ☐ ½ cup large, unsweetened coconut flakes, to garnish
- ☐ ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves, to garnish

Method

1. In a large Dutch oven or pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, curry paste, coriander, cumin, salt, and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine and cook for 5 minutes, until the onion is translucent.
2. Add the butternut squash and cook for 1 minute. Add broth and bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15–20 minutes until the squash is soft.
3. While the soup is cooking, toast the coconut flakes in a medium skillet over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until they are golden

brown around the edges. Remove from heat and let cool.

4. Once the squash is soft, remove the soup from the heat and let it cool slightly. Working in batches, transfer the soup mixture to a blender and blend until smooth or use an immersion blender. Return puréed soup to the pot, and repeat until all the soup is blended.

5. Stir the lime juice into the blended soup. Taste and season with any additional spices as necessary.

6. Serve drizzled with coconut milk and sprinkled with toasted coconut flakes and fresh cilantro.



Svadisthana Sacral Chakra

Turmeric Butternut Squash Ginger Bisque | Serves 4

Ingredients

- ☐ 1 large butternut squash, roasted (or 2 sweet potatoes)
- ☐ 1 tbsp coconut oil
- ☐ 1-in piece fresh ginger, chopped
- ☐ 1 yellow onion, diced (reduce or replace with 1 bulb fennel for Pitta/ yogic path)
- ☐ 2 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- ☐ 14oz full-fat can coconut milk
- ☐ 1 tsp turmeric
- ☐ ½ tsp cinnamon
- ☐ ¼ tsp salt salt
- ☐ 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ☐ pumpkin seeds, to garnish
- ☐ fresh cilantro, to garnish

Method

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the coconut oil over medium heat. Add the ginger and onion and sauté until softened, about 3 minutes.

2. Add the stock, bring to a boil, and add the cooked butternut squash. Stir in the coconut milk, turmeric,

cinnamon, salt, and pepper. Cover with lid, reduce heat to low and let simmer for five minutes.

3. Blend the soup to a smooth purée using an immersion blender, or let it cool and purée it in batches using a regular blender. Serve garnished with pumpkin seeds and fresh cilantro.

Sahasrara Crown Chakra
Creamy Beet soup | Serves 4



Ingredients

- ☐ 3 medium purple beets, tops removed
- ☐ 2 tsp sesame, coconut or grapeseed oil
- ☐ 1 yellow onion or 1 bulb fennel, chopped
- ☐ 3 garlic cloves, minced (reduce or replace with ¾ tsp asafoetida for Pitta/yogic path)
- ☐ 4 cups water or vegetable broth
- ☐ 1 tsp freshly grated ginger
- ☐ ½ cup cashews, soaked and drained
- ☐ ¼ tsp turmeric
- ☐ ½ tsp salt, plus more to taste
- ☐ ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- ☐ 2/3 cup Cashew Sour Cream, to serve

Method

- 1.** Preheat oven to 400°F. Place beets in large Dutch oven or baking dish. Roast for 1 hour, covered, until easily pierced with a fork. Let cool. Remove the skins (they should slip off easily when rubbed) and chop the beets.
- 2.** In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for 5 minutes until transparent. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
- 3.** Stir in vegetable broth and roasted beets. Bring to a boil and cook until

the beets are heated through. Remove from heat and let cool.

- 4.** Working in small batches, transfer the beet mixture to a blender and purée with ginger, cashew, turmeric, salt and pepper until smooth. Transfer pureed soup back to the soup pot over medium heat and repeat until all the soup is pureed.
- 5.** Cook over medium heat until hot, then serve soup in bowls and top with a large dollop of Cashew Sour Cream.



Anahata Heart Chakra
Raw green mint soup | Serves 2



Ingredients

- ☐ 2½ cups water
- ☐ 2 cup baby spinach leaves, packed
- ☐ 1 avocado, pitted and peeled
- ☐ ½ English cucumber, roughly chopped
- ☐ 1 small zucchini, chopped
- ☐ ½ cup mint leaves, packed
- ☐ 2 tbsp fresh lime juice, plus more to taste
- ☐ ¼ cup raw almonds, soaked overnight (optional)
- ☐ ¼ tsp sea salt
- ☐ ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- ☐ 1 garlic clove (omit for Pitta)
- ☐ Watermelon, for garnish

Method

- 1.** In a blender, combine all ingredients and blend on high for 30–60 seconds until smooth and creamy. Add more water to thin out the soup if desired.
- 2.** Taste and add more mint, lime juice, salt, and pepper to get it to your liking. Serve immediately.



Ajna Third Eye Chakra
Purple sweet potato coconut soup | Serves 4

Ingredients

- ☐ ½ pound purple sweet potatoes, baked (2 small)
- ☐ 1 tsp coconut oil
- ☐ ½ medium yellow onion or 1/2 bulb fennel, chopped
- ☐ ½-in piece fresh ginger root, thinly sliced
- ☐ 1 cup full-fat coconut milk
- ☐ 1 cup vegetable broth or water
- ☐ 1 tbsp lemon juice
- ☐ ¼ tsp sea salt
- ☐ 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- ☐ 2 tbsp chopped cilantro

Method

- 1.** In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat coconut oil over medium heat. Add the onion and ginger and sauté for 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.
- 2.** Whisk in the coconut milk and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes.
- 3.** Remove the sweet potato from the skins and cut into ½-inch chunks. Add to the pot and cook for 5 minutes more.
- 4.** Before serving, stir in lemon juice and season with salt. Serve topped with a drizzle of toasted sesame oil and a sprinkle of fresh cilantro.





Manipura Solar Plexus Chakra

Golden Turmeric Cauliflower Soup | Serves 4

Ingredients

- ☐ 6 heaping cups cauliflower florets
- ☐ 3 garlic cloves, minced or ¾ tsp asafetida for Pittas
- ☐ 2 tbsp + 1 tsp grapeseed, coconut or avocado oil, divided
- ☐ 1 tsp turmeric
- ☐ 1 tsp ground cumin
- ☐ ⅛ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (omit for Pitta)
- ☐ ½ tsp kosher salt, to taste
- ☐ 1 medium yellow onion or fennel bulb, chopped
- ☐ 3 cups vegetable broth
- ☐ ¼ cup full-fat canned coconut milk, shaken well, to serve
- ☐ 2 tbsp chopped cilantro, to garnish

Method

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 450°F. In a large bowl, toss the cauliflower and garlic with 2 tbsp oil until well coated. Add the turmeric, cumin, red pepper flakes, and toss well to coat evenly.
- 2.** Spread the cauliflower on a baking sheet in a single layer and bake for 25–30 minutes or until browned and tender.
- 3.** Meanwhile, in a large pot or Dutch oven, heat remaining 1 tsp oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook for 2–3 minutes until onion is translucent.
- 4.** When the cauliflower is done baking, remove from the oven.

Reserve 1 cup to top the soup. Take the rest of the cauliflower and add to the medium pot with the onions and pour in the vegetable broth. Bring the broth to a boil then cover and cook on low for 15 minutes.

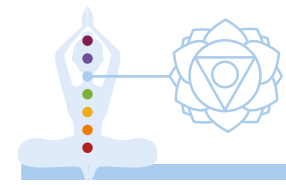
5. Blend the soup to a smooth purée using an immersion blender, or let it cool and purée it in batches using a regular blender. Transfer pureed soup to a serving bowl and repeat until all the soup is pureed.

6. Serve soup in bowls and top with reserved roasted cauliflower, a drizzle of coconut milk, and a sprinkle of fresh cilantro.



Vissudha Throat Chakra

Spirulina cream of cauliflower soup | Serves 4



Ingredients

- ☐ 1 tbsp sesame, coconut or grapeseed oil
- ☐ 2 garlic cloves, minced (reduce or omit for Pitta)
- ☐ ½ yellow onion or 1/2 bulb fennel
- ☐ 1 large head of cauliflower, chopped
- ☐ 4 cups vegetable broth
- ☐ ¼ cup raw unsalted cashews or
- ☐ ½ cup full-fat coconut milk
- ☐ 2 tbsp lime
- ☐ 1 tsp blue spirulina
- ☐ 1/2 tsp sea salt, plus more to taste
- ☐ 2 tbsp hemp seeds, to garnish

Method

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and onion, sautéing for 3 minutes until slightly brown. Add the cauliflower and sauté for 1 minute more.

2. Add the vegetable broth and increase heat to bring the mixture to a boil. Once boiling, reduce heat and simmer for 20–30 minutes until cauliflower is tender.

3. Remove the soup from the heat and refrigerate to cool to a warm to room temperature. Transfer the soup mixture to a blender with the cashews and blend on high for 1 minute until smooth and creamy.

4. Lastly, add the blue spirulina and blend briefly, as excess heat from blending will diminish its nutritional value. Stir in salt to taste. Serve soup in bowls and top with hemp seeds.



WHO IS

DEEPAK CHOPRA?

When baby Deepak was six years old, his world was thrown into Existential Crisis.

Article by Kevin Ellerton. Photos by Bob Deutsch & Makenna Colon.



Kevin: “Did you have a spiritual inclination as a child that led you down this path [as a spiritual teacher?]”



Deepak: “When I was six or seven, I was living with my grandparents [in India].

My parents were in England - my father was studying to be a cardiologist. One day we got a telegram from my dad that he had become a member of the Royal College of Physicians in England. My grandfather was so excited that he fired a few rifle shots into the air, took us to a movie, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, took us to a carnival, and then he died in the middle of the night.

“I was in grief. I had no idea what had happened. And I started to wonder about the mystery of Death.

“That curiosity about Death is why I went to medical school, honestly. I also wanted to be a writer. That has driven me and my spiritual quest all my life.”

A Growing Deepak

Young Deepak yearned to become a writer, but his father pushed him to become a doctor. En route to start his medical internship at an Emergency Room in New Jersey, Deepak had a layover in Europe. He spent all of his money in one crazy night at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, and arrived at JFK penniless.

He placed a collect call to the hospital administrator in New Jersey, who sent a helicopter to pick him up.

Looking down over the enormous skyscrapers of New York City, Deepak was dazzled by the epic splendor, his first glimpse of the grandeur of the Western World.

But when he actually began to run on the hamster wheel that is the western medical lifestyle, young Deepak was disillusioned.

Deepak: “As a medical student I smoked cigarettes, I drank alcohol... as a resident I was stressed out, I was taking care of many patients, and I couldn’t take care of myself. So I went back to meditation in a very structured way and that changed my life.”

Deepak Chopra Changes The World

After helping his medical colleagues overcome some of their personal & emotional issues, Deepak founded the Chopra Center for Wellbeing in 1993, and rocketed to fame that same year after being featured on The Oprah Winfrey Show.

Since then, Deepak has been speaking and writing prolifically about meditation and meditative spirituality. Deepak has written 80+ books on the subject, 20+ of which have been NY Times Bestsellers, and has been a ubiquitous media presence over the past few decades. It would not be a stretch to say that Deepak has been one of the greatest popularizers of Eastern spiritual wisdom in mainstream American society in the past thirty years.

Fame & Criticism

While Deepak’s accomplishments are undeniable, he has drawn his fair share of criticism. The critiques tend to center around three general themes:

1. Insinuations that Deepak is commercializing Eastern spirituality, with money being his chief motivation, and that he doesn’t practice what he preaches.
2. Assertions that Deepak misinterprets and mysticizes quantum mechanics concepts, as a way to link his teachings to cutting-edge science.
3. Assertions that the concepts he discusses are “woo-woo” or “word salad”.

Millennials Raise A Collective Eyebrow

I have to admit, I never really paid attention to Deepak Chopra until the opportunity to interview him fell into my lap.

My personal spiritual journey started when I accidentally opened Eckhart Tolle’s “The Power of Now” and had my mind blown wide open. Then I gravitated toward some of the “millennial-favorite” teachers, gurus & philosophers like Ram Dass, Pema Chodron, Alan Watts, Carl Sagan, Amma, and yes, even Joe Rogan. I always saw Deepak as appealing more to an older generation.

When Joe Rogan used the phrase ‘word salad’ to refer to Deepak’s speeches, I had to chuckle. It was a funny, relatable observation.

I had only ever heard a few clips of Deepak talking, in passing, and it always kind of sounded like a bunch of fancy spiritual buzz words strung together. To be honest, that's why I hadn't been attracted to him as a teacher. I wanted quick, easy-to-digest Enlightenment, spoken in my own language, that fit easily within my scientific paradigm. Deepak's ideas about the Universe arising within Consciousness did tend to sound "woo." They were too far outside of my "physicalist" world-view to make sense to my ears.

If you told me ten years ago that in 2021 I'd be defending Deepak Chopra against internet trolls on social media, I would have rolled my eyes.

When life gives you Word Salad, make Universe Stir-Fry

Over the past few years, I've traveled around the world interviewing Gurus from various spiritual traditions. During this period, I've gained a much deeper appreciation for the breadth of perspectives that spiritual teachers, and ancient spiritual traditions, have about the nature of Reality.

Modern, science-minded Gurus tend to view life through a lens that looks something like this:

"First there was a Big Bang. Then matter and energy spun out all over the place. The Earth formed in this far-flung corner of a random galaxy,

The Milky Way. Random stuff happened, there were amoebas, there was evolution, and now we exist. And spirituality is something that we do, as humans, to feel better about our fleeting Existence and impending demise."

That's kind of where I was at myself, so I resonated with that type of thinking. I think Joe Rogan, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and similar thinkers are somewhere in that camp as well.

But over the course of my travels, I encountered Gurus with a dramatically different world-view. I didn't understand it at first. I brushed it off, dismissing it as "woo." I ran away,

thinking "these guys are nuts." But at some point, I started to see where they were coming from.

Physicalism vs Idealism

There are two basic world-views when it comes to understanding the fundamental nature of Reality. They are broadly described as "*physicalism*" vs "*idealism*."

Physicalism is the world-view that Existence is, basically, physical. Matter & energy are at the core of everything... even consciousness. Matter and energy give rise to our bodies & brains, and consciousness arises from there. Most modern scientists view the world through the lens of physicalism, whether they realize it or not. Many physicalists have no idea that there is even any viable alternative to this world-view.

Idealism ("Philosophical Idealism," not to be confused with "*idealistic*" idealism, which is a totally different thing) is the *other* world-view. In stark contrast with physicalism, idealism is the world-view that Existence is fundamentally based in consciousness... not matter. The world that we see around us (including our bodies, brains, etc) is all just a dream that arises within Consciousness.

The 1999 Keanu Reeves film "The Matrix" provides a helpful thought experiment to illustrate the concept of Philosophical Idealism. What if the whole world that you see around you is all just a dream, or a simulation?

"Inception" played on a similar idea, as did lesser known films like "Existenz", "The Thirteenth Floor", and many others.

There is an ancient Hindu idea that the entire Universe is just "*a dream in the mind of God*." Philosophical Idealism has roots that go back into prehistory, running right alongside Physicalism into the mists of eons past.

Physicalism is at the root of the modern scientific paradigm... but Idealism is at the root of mysticism & spirituality. Physicalism feels grounded in "common sense," but Idealism has a kind of trippy, far-out appeal to it, that pulls us in and makes us wonder: *what if?*

Of course, there are many philosophers who have mixed and blended these two basic world-views into various hybrids over the millennia. Maybe consciousness and matter arise from each other (yin and yang). Maybe matter and consciousness are two coexisting bases of Reality, like two parents giving rise to a child. Maybe Existence is fundamentally physical, and there is some "base reality" made of matter & energy, but the Universe we see around us is actually existing within consciousness. Maybe these are all just different ways of viewing and describing the same Reality (*hmmm....*)

Even that great paragon of science and engineering Elon Musk is attracted to these ideas. Elon has been quoted widely in the media for saying that he believes we are living in a Matrix-like simulation.

"There's a billion to one chance we're living in base reality... quite frankly, if we are not living in a simulation, it is an extraordinarily unlikely circumstance."
— Elon Musk

There's no "right" or "wrong" in this ancient metaphysical debate.

If we're in The Matrix, there's no way we could know that we are.

If we're **NOT** in The Matrix, there's no way we could know that we're not.

For thousands of years the debate has raged, and nobody has ever been able to prove one side or the other.

Just because the majority of modern westerners tends to *believe* in Physicalism doesn't make it *true*. In fact, the idea that mass belief makes something objectively true is exactly the type of woo-woo nonsense that Rogan & friends love to argue against.

Deepak Chopra: Woo-Woo or Guru?

Before I had really done a deep dive into his work, my idea of Deepak was one that was built from fleeting glimpses of random videos, third-person trash-talking, and reputation. Not a great way to form an informed opinion about a human being.

From this superficial vantage point, it seemed like Deepak might just be exploiting ancient mysticism by stringing together spiritual buzzwords and new-age mumbo jumbo in order to gain fame and fortune.

"I went back to meditation in a very structured way and that changed my life."



But after my conversations with Gurus around the world and my explorations of Idealist philosophy, (most of) Deepak’s words no longer sound woo to my ears, nor do they sound like “word salad.”

In fact, as I watched Deepak’s videos, speeches, and films in preparation for our interview, it sounded to me like he was just trying to explain some common-sense facts about meditation and mental health in a way that would be relatable to mainstream Americans.

And when people ask him about metaphysics and The Nature of Reality, he does his best to explain his world-view - which struck me, before our interview, as a relatively well-thought-through expression of philosophical idealism. So I started to think differently about Deepak Chopra.

I started to realize that I had misunderstood Deepak completely. I had thought that he was trying to hold himself out as some Enlightened Guru who knew everything in order to live a life of fame, fortune and celebrity. But after really watching the materials that he puts out there, the way he speaks, and the actions he takes in the world, (especially his humble response to his son’s irreverent documentary) it seems to me that Deepak is actually a relatively humble human being who really wants to make the world a better place... and he has chosen to do so by spreading meditation and Eastern spiritual wisdom throughout the western world.

Does the pushback against Deepak really just come down to Physicalism v Idealism?

And then it occurred to me: maybe the whole “Deepak v Rogan and Friends” debate boils down, simply, to Physicalism vs. Idealism!

Maybe the physicalist tribe that dominates the internet is hearing Deepak’s words as “woo” for the same reason that I used to: because they don’t understand that physicalism is just one way to view Reality.



I thought to myself: maybe I can help settle this argument between these two modern philosophers - both of whom I respect and admire in different ways. There is no clear right and wrong between physicalism and idealism; they’re both just viewing the same Universe from different angles!

So, in our interview, I really dug into the topic of Awakening, Reality, Existence... and I flat out asked Deepak if he was a Philosophical Idealist.

From Dream World To Awakening

Deepak: “We are right now in a lucid dream. Wittgenstein, the great German philosopher, said, ‘We are asleep. Our life is a dream. But we wake up sometimes, just enough to know that we are dreaming.’ So I think everyone has that experience of waking up, to know that they’re dreaming.”

Kevin: “So what are we dreaming, and what are we waking up to?”

Deepak: “The dream state is Karma, which is recycled habits and social conditioning, and the fragmented mind that results in what we call a “pain body.” Pain body and pleasure body go together because, you know, when you have pleasure you’re worried about how long it’s going to last! And that causes pain. So suffering is being addicted either to pain or pleasure, but liberation is enjoying and being fully aware in the midst of [the fluctuating cycle of] pain and pleasure.

“The karmic program creates what is called the pain body, and liberation creates what the buddhists called the “Rainbow Body,” which is the subtle body. But then beyond that, something called the “Bliss Body” which is transparent body and luminous world as the experience. And that’s fully awake. And in that, you can choreograph and orchestrate and upgrade

the dream if you want to. And you know a nightmare when it happens once in a while.”

I must take a moment to note that there were a LOT of concepts thrown into that very short period of speech. This is the type of thing that some of Deepak’s critics refer to as “word salad.” But Deepak knew that he was speaking to an experienced meditator - he was doing an interview for Meditation Magazine. While I had never heard of some of the terms (like “Rainbow Body” which I looked up afterward), I knew what Deepak was talking about, because I have had these types of experiences in my own life and my own meditations.

Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain does indeed create suffering. Being in an equanimous state in the midst of pain and pleasure is my definition of Zen. When I sit for a while in that equanimous state, and settle into deep meditation, there is an expansive feeling, where the individual consciousness dissolves into an infinite, luminous Universe-consciousness.

I can imagine how someone who has never had this type of experience would hear Deepak’s words and interpret them as “mumbo jumbo.” But to me, they made sense.

Kevin: “So it’s The Universe; the Transparent Body is everything in Existence. And then the dream is that you are this small human... but really you’re the whole of it, the entire thing?”

Deepak: “The entire thing, yes. Experience it as Presence. And we

experience it as presence not only in ourselves, but the same divine presence pervades and permeates everything that is. That is *Tat Tvam Asi* [the ancient mantra, *You Are That*].”

Kevin: “So, you’re referring to The Consciousness that is everything... The Universe-Consciousness.

“This brings me to something that I really wanted to talk to you about, that I think is really lacking in the discourse right now.

“I see people like Joe Rogan, Michael Shermer, Sam Harris... you argue with these guys a lot. I love to watch you guys arguing together because to me it seems like you’re fleshing out the difference between idealism and physicalism.

“Physicalism and idealism are these sort of ancient concepts, where some people see Existence as arising principally from matter, and then consciousness comes from matter... But then idealism is sort of the opposite: consciousness is everything, and then matter arises from consciousness. And of course there are variations of these, and there’s dualism where both matter & consciousness are arising from each other.

“To me, when I watch the debates between you and Michael Shermer and Sam Harris, and when I see Joe Rogan talking about it, I think they don’t understand that maybe the difference in perspective is coming from idealism versus physicalism. I wanted to get your perspective: does matter come from consciousness? Or vice versa?”

Deepak: “Okay so first of all Kevin, that debate has been going on forever in the wisdom traditions of India, and that debate has been going on in every circle, Buddhist and agnostic and atheist and idealist.

“I am not an idealist and I’m not a physicalist. I think those are philosophies that are incomplete.

“What I’m arguing about, and have argued about with Shermer and Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins and Joe Rogan, is that their philosophies are based on something called Naive Realism. Naive Realism dominates all of scientific dialogue. Even Einstein was a Naive Realist.

“Naive Realism is based on the notion that the physical world exists exactly as it is perceived by the five human senses even if no one is observing it.

“So that - on the face of it - that’s ridiculous. The physical universe exists as perceived by the five human senses? So what about an insect with a hundred eyes? What about a dolphin? What about a bat that experiences the world through the echo of ultrasound? What about bees that navigate through ultraviolet? There is no such thing as a fixed reality.

“And even Idealism is based on the fact that ‘my consciousness is producing the physical universe’ — which is also totally wrong.

“So we have to address this basic idea, Naive Realism.

“Is there a physical world in the absence of an observer? Now, what we call the physical world is a species-specific observation of human experience, as we experience it through the five

senses... which is a very narrow bandwidth of perceptual activity! In fact, less than 0.1 of the activity that’s available. The human visual experience is between 300 to 800 nanometers... there’s nothing sacred outside of that apparently. But we cannot experience it even with our technologies. Our senses tell us the Earth is flat... nobody believes that anymore. Our senses tell us the ground I’m standing on is stationary... and it’s spinning at dizzying speeds and hurtling through space at thousands of miles an hour. Our senses tell me that the body is physical... we know it’s proportionately as void as intergalactic space. So these are all the things that are now being questioned as Naive Realism.”

Kevin: “So if this (waves arms around, indicating the outside world) is all in here (points toward head)...”

Deepak: “No no, it’s not in here (points toward his head)... THIS [head] is in THAT [consciousness].

“In consciousness. In consciousness. Brain and body are also in consciousness. So when we say “in here” (pointing to his head), we are again resorting to Naive Realism.”

Kevin: “So then, would the consciousness still be there, and still be experiencing the Universe, if there were no conscious beings, like humans and ants and cats and dogs and stuff?”

Deepak: “Consciousness is inherently independent of the instruments it uses to have perceptual experience. So consciousness is independent of body-mind and its experiences, because it’s free, and being free it’s always infinite possibilities. And it can morph itself into any experience. In

fact right now, we are morphing from the formless into this experience, right this moment! So death is also a human construct based on false identity.”

Kevin: “So that Universal Consciousness, that transcends, and is independent of, all these vessels... I guess maybe that’s what people call ‘God.’”

Deepak: “I don’t know, everybody has different definitions of things, but I think that’s a very powerful thing, the Universe Consciousness. But you know as soon as you say “God,” people have an image. So if you have an image about God, then it’s not God. If you can define God, he’s not God.”

Did that make sense to you?

As someone who has traveled around the world and spoken with a lot of

amazing Gurus, I have to say, the concepts that Deepak communicated in our interview (and in most of his other publicly available videos) are very much in line with deep Hindu & Yogic spiritual traditions that stretch back to ancient India, and other ancient traditions as well. They are also not “unscientific”... in fact, Deepak’s scientific training, as an MD gives him a very real grounding in understanding and communicating the biology of human consciousness & experience.

To a reader who is used to hearing purely physicalist interpretations of Reality from Gurus like Carl Sagan and Joe Rogan... Deepak’s explanations might indeed sound like “word salad.” In fact, we got a lot of unkind (if slightly amusing) comments on the interview videos we uploaded:



Deepak Chopra meditating on the beach during the pandemic, connecting with the Universe, being Existence.

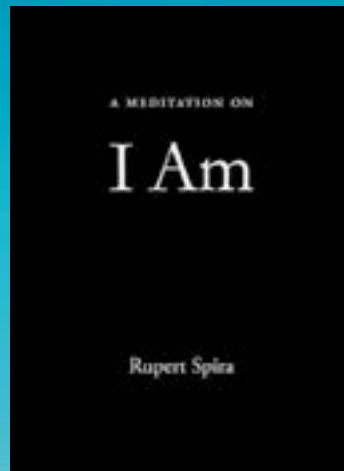
“I am not an idealist and I’m not a physicalist. I think those are philosophies that are incomplete.”



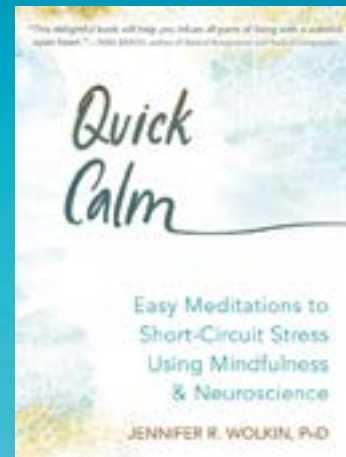
BOOKS FOR LIVING CONSCIOUSLY IN THE MODERN WORLD



978-1684036998 | US \$18.95



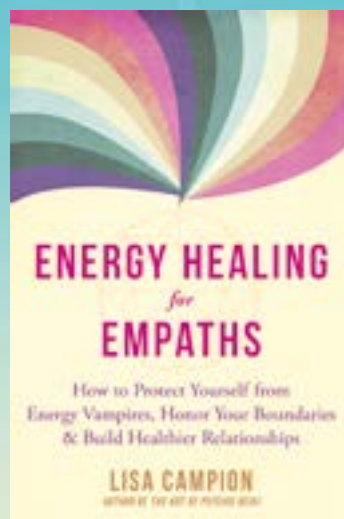
978-1684037940 | US \$16.95



978-1684036080 | US \$16.95



978-1684035182 | US \$18.95



978-1684035922 | US \$18.95



978-1684035724 | US \$18.95

GET A FREE E-BOOK! SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER
& RECEIVE OUR FREE E-BOOK SAMPLER
newharbinger.com/join-us

 **newharbinger**publications

 NON-DUALITY PRESS  SAHAJA  REVEAL PRESS

newharbinger.com | 1-800-748-6273



Incomprehensible, or Misunderstood?

The thing is - when you actually take the time to understand the things that Deepak is talking about, and understand what the world looks like from an Idealist's perspective, you start to realize that Deepak is simply trying to communicate a lot of deep experiences and concepts in a very short period of time.

Yes, sometimes that means he doesn't take the time to explain each concept, speaking briskly and assuming that the listener has some pre-existing experience or understanding of deep concepts like Karma, Universe-Consciousness, subjective vs objective reality, etc.

When someone who is unfamiliar with these concepts tries to listen, it can sound like "mumbo jumbo" or "word salad." But when you know what you're listening to, you hear an intelligent, wise, well-intentioned man who is just trying to help the world be a happier and more Enlightened place.

From Glorious Guru To Humble Human

An evolution is happening in our culture, right now. It is happening among celebrities like Kristen Bell and Dax Shepard, and among spiritual communicators like Rachel Brathen and, yes, even Deepak Chopra.

Over the millennia of human civilization, there has been a tendency among leaders of all kinds

(politicians, CEOs, celebrities, spiritual leaders, and others) to project an image of super-human perfection.

After all, if I'm just a regular ol' human, what separates me from the masses? What makes me better than everybody else? Why should anybody listen to me, pay attention to me, follow me?

With the advent of the internet and social media, technology has finally given us the chance to get an intimate glimpse into the day-to-day lives of our leaders. Elon Musk tweets randomly about TV shows and funny memes. Celebrities and spiritual leaders like Kristen Bell and Rachel Brathen share moments of struggle, imperfection and flawed humanity.

Back in 2012, just as this wave of humanized-leadership was getting off the ground, Deepak's son filmed & published a documentary called "Decoding Deepak" that humorously and realistically portrayed his father as an actual Human Being.

Rather than communicating ideals, listing health tips and spouting philosophies, Gotham Chopra followed his dad around with a camera, and filmed him in what some might see as "compromising" situations.

Clutching his cell phone while walking around in monk robes.

Snoring on his yoga mat when he was supposed to be meditating.

Pacing anxiously in a monastery, ruminating about a debate he'd had with Michael Shermer, when he was supposed to be "letting go."

GOTHAM CHOPRA:

"You're supposed to be detached from that right now."

DEEPAK (matter-of-factly):

"I'm not."

While some "Perfect Gurus" might have been upset by this type of documentary, Deepak was proud of his son. In interviews about the documentary, Deepak seemed even to have taken some self-awareness from it.

In an interview with ABC's Dan Harris, Deepak reflects on whether or not he changed after seeing the documentary.

"I think I've gone through some transition and introspection. [I used to think that I was always right. After seeing the documentary I] thought about that, and thought, maybe I am wrong! At least he perceives me as wrong many times. So maybe there's some truth to it! Yes... there is a change."

Making The World a Better Place

You may be wondering how the opportunity to interview Deepak Chopra had simply "fallen into my lap."

Well, a few months ago, I started working with a talented PR

"Deepak Chopra changed my life."

enthusiast, TED speaker, social media influencer and anxiety & meditation activist named Megan Gallagher. Megan was contacted by a womens' underwear company called EBY to help promote their mission: empowering women in the third-world by putting a portion of their profits into micro-loans for female-owned small businesses in underserved areas.

EBY happened to be working with Deepak Chopra at the time, in a partnership to cross-promote their micro-lending initiative with Deepak's "Love In Action" mental-health video series, which was geared toward single mothers who were affected by the pandemic. Megan brought us all together, and it flowed from there.

To be honest, I didn't really care about EBY's micro-lending mission, or Deepak's "Love In Action" series. All I cared about was talking to Deepak about the mysteries of Existence, The Fundamental Nature of Reality, and exploring the whole "Physicalism v Idealism" debate.

But as I dug into the Love In Action videos, I started to see the depths of love and compassion that spurred Deepak to create this series. In the videos, he speaks urgently about the people who are being hit hardest by the pandemic, and the concurrent epidemic of suicides that is resulting from these conditions. In the videos, which are cur-

rently being offered for free, Deepak provides powerful mental health advice, techniques, and resources for people who are struggling, who need it most.

This type of love and compassion is representative of a person whose fundamental motivation is to help people and make the world a better place. I am really glad that I watched those videos, because it gave me a much more well-rounded understanding of Deepak Chopra as a human being.

The Path of the Bodhisattva

Everyone has heard of the Buddha, but few have heard the word *bodhisattva*.

In Buddhism, the word "Buddha" means "Awakened One." It's a term generally reserved for people who go off to live in the wilderness, and meditate 24/7 for the rest of their lives.

A bodhisattva, on the other hand, is someone who understands how Awakening works, and has the opportunity to go toward Nirvana, but chooses instead to stay in society and fight, to help other people Awaken as well.

Pretty much anyone you've heard teaching meditation in some form or another - anyone who's writing books, making videos, or engaging with society in some way - is on the path of the bodhisattva.

The image of Deepak in monk robes, while refusing to give up his cell phone - this is the image of the bodhisattva.

Still making an impact.

In the weeks since our interview, with all the negative comments on our social media posts, ranging from "quack quack" to "Mister Word Salad," I wondered if the entire world had turned against Deepak. It was my family and friends that made me realize that this was not the case.

It always came up in random conversations. "Oh, I saw you interviewed Deepak Chopra! That's awesome."

I thought, "OK, well at least there's one person who doesn't hate on Deepak."

But then they would elaborate...

"My wife and I are actually going through one of his courses right now... it's really amazing."

"I listen to him every day."

"Deepak Chopra changed my life."

Having this kind of sanity-check from normal people, outside the twitterverse, off of social media, far from the merciless fingertips of Joe Rogan's Army of Trolls, was really what brought me back to the big picture.

So Who IS Deepak Chopra?

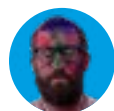
Deepak Chopra is a well-intentioned, intellectual Indian man, with a doctorate and a big heart, who has done more to popularize meditation and Eastern spirituality in western society than pretty much any other human alive.

Or, on a more objective level, Deepak is an ephemeral, yet eternal, manifestation of The Universe, Consciousness, Matter & Energy (maybe?) and most importantly, Existence Itself.



chillin with kabaka pyramid

Interview by Kevin Ellerton. Photography by Tizzy Tokyo (Teisha Pough)



Kevin Ellerton: How did you get started on the spiritual path?



Kabaka Pyramid: I grew up in a Christian family. Baptized when I was ten, church every Sunday... I was taught to believe that the Bible was true, word for word. But an artist called Sizzler, his music gave me this radical, kind of militant but still philosophical way of breaking those chains that I was held down by.

I didn't really take to reading or education until this Rastafari journey began.

For us in Jamaica, I always say that Rastafari is that spiritual tradition, like the monks in the Himalayas. That's Rasta for us. The Rastas that are really revered, they're in the hills, they don't eat anything from animals, they are One with nature. That kind of vibe.

The main things I took from the Rastafari journey was the knowledge of Self... the main element for me was looking within for Truth, that's what brought me into spiritual consciousness.

This was all around 2002, when I was 17.

Kevin: Wow. I can definitely relate to “breaking the chains,” as someone who grew up in a religious Jewish household. For some reason, my breaking of chains came after watching “The Matrix” and realizing that maybe there was more to life than I had been taught. So I went from studying to become a Rabbi in Jerusalem, to an extremely depressed Nihilist. Luckily, I had a friend that taught me meditation in college and then I became much happier. Was your trajectory similar?

Kabaka: [chuckles] It was slightly different, but I can relate to that a lot.

For me, in my breakaway phase, it was really ganja that made me start thinking for myself. I've never done anything stronger than that, because I'm the kind of person that likes to keep my mind within certain bounds.

If my mind goes beyond certain bounds, I find myself experiencing a lot of anxiety. I went through a pretty dark phase with anxiety.



The root of my anxiety is when I feel a lack of control. For me, it's funny because meditation... I've always felt like I haven't fully sunk into it because there is a strong want to not give up an aspect of control. I'm very much a mental person - an Aries, and Aries is ruled by the head.

I always feel like when I'm meditating, something is pulling me outside of my body but at the same time, I feel like I'm being pulled in. It's like this rush and then I get to the point where I'm like, "All right, I'm here, I'm not afraid. Let's just see where this goes."

But then there is an instinctive anxiety feeling that kicks in where my heart starts to beat a little faster. Even if mentally I'm not scared, it's

like something is programmed to not go further than that point. It feels like I'm going to leave my body. It feels like I'm being pulled to another galaxy.

Kevin: Oh, I know that feeling... you feel like you're going to leave your body, right? It's that moment that you're trying to let go of the thinking process. You're getting there, getting there, getting there... but it's like, "If I let go any more, it's going to be gone!" You call it "Leaving your body..."

But the key is to reframe the way you think about who you are. Because it sounds like you're identifying your "self" as the thinking process. All your thoughts, all your beliefs, even the

Below & right: Kabaka performing in concert. Kabaka is a rising star in the Jamaican reggae scene.



PHOTOGRAPHY: LEFT - DAMALISTIK (DAMIEN ALBERT)



"It was really ganja that made me start thinking for myself."

idea that you are "Kabaka Pyramid"... if you are THAT, then as soon as you stop thinking...

Kabaka: Then you'll cease to exist!

Kevin: Yes! You'll cease to exist, and you're gone!

Kabaka: Right but, intellectually I know that that's not true. I know that my Self is separate from all of that. There's one thing in knowing it intellectually, but *actually* centering yourself in that knowing of it, and feeling confident in it in the moment, I think that still takes practice, and it takes... I don't know what it takes...

Kevin: The Buddha actually gave a really helpful tip for this type of thing. He said "the key is to stay in your body." If you are completely absorbed in the sensations of your body... your skin, your chest, your legs, everything... then when the thinking process falls away, you're still here, as your body, in your body.

Kabaka: I totally get that. On my path I've studied ancient Egyptian spirituality, with the Ka and the Ba and learning about the different aspects of the body. I've studied western esoterism like Rosicrucianism and Rudolf Steiner ... I think that was important for me



“There’s one thing in knowing it intellectually, but centering yourself in that knowing... that still takes practice.”

because it’s important to have an intellectual understanding of spirit. I feel like those traditions are important.

I can differentiate between the ethereal body, the astral body, the physical body, the mental body, and the ego. They’re all separate entities and I might not be able to be totally conscious of them all at this point, but I understand the difference. I think there is a level of discipline, of every day practice that is tricky... that has been my holdback with progressing through meditation. If I don’t feel like I’m noticing changes, then life sets in and I don’t continue the routine.

Kevin: Yeah, routine is key. Even a minute of meditation before bed rewires your brain and changes the neural pathways.



TO LISTEN TO THE REST OF OUR CONVERSATION WITH KABAKA PYRAMID, SCAN THIS QR CODE OR VISIT OUR YOUTUBE PAGE!



The ancient practice of sound healing has many modern benefits and is a great technique to relieve anxiety in today's stressful society. Sound can have many healing properties, and sound therapy is a great way to boost a person's mood, relieve stress, improve energy, and help regulate and enhance sleep. A Sound Bath is an acoustic meditative healing journey that relaxes the body, clears the subconscious, calms the mind, and activates your body's natural healing systems.

How it works

Sound healing relaxes the body and counters the stress response by activating the parasympathetic nervous system that helps to slow down the heart rate, reduces blood pressure, and activates healing in the body. Sound Baths use a wide variety of ancient sound healing instruments, including planetary tuned gongs, crystal singing

bowls, Tibetan bowls, and more to create a sound healing experience that will vibrate and activate every cell in your body, leaving you feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. Sound Healing is so effective because it influences our emotional bodies as well as our physical bodies. Different sound vibrations interact with our physical and energetic bodies in beneficial ways.

Some possible healing benefits

- Activates Higher States of Consciousness
- Unlocks Blocked Emotions
- Relieves Anxiety and Stress
- Induces Relaxation
- Promotes Deep Meditation
- Heightens Clarity
- Improves Ability to Concentrate
- Relieves Insomnia
- Decreases Depression
- Normalizes Blood Pressure
- Relieves Physical Pain
- Releases Emotional Trauma



“Create a sound healing experience that will vibrate and activate every cell in your body”



Ana incorporates the powerful presence of wolves into her meditations. Scary, beautiful, or both?



“The gong vibration impacts the body and its meridians. It releases blocks, reduces tension and stimulates circulation”

Gong sound therapy has been practiced for thousands of years. Scientific evidence suggests that certain forms of sound therapy prompt damaged human DNA strands to repair themselves. Some frequencies are thought to promote vitality and healing, and also to enhance happiness.

The gong vibration impacts the body and its meridians. It releases blocks, reduces tension and stimulates circulation. The gong changes the feelings that are blocked by cutting the thoughts that sustain and recreate the feelings.

Scientific studies are finding that sound healing can help with arthritis,

tinnitus, autoimmune disease, and more using vibrational frequencies. Many studies conducted all over the world are confirming that these ancient healing methods, which have been around for centuries, help with the healing process in a more natural way. Dr Mitchell Gaynor, the director of medical oncology at the Strang Cornell Cancer Prevention center, said when people are relaxed as a result of listening to sound frequencies, their heart rates are steady, their breathing is deep and slow and their stress hormones decrease, allowing the immune system to function more efficiently, lowering blood pressure and releasing natural opiates.



TO WATCH ANA'S MEDMAG PODCAST APPEARANCE AND ONLINE SOUNDBATH, SCAN THIS QR CODE, OR CHECK [MEDITATIONMAG.COM/INTERVIEWS/ANA](https://meditationmag.com/interviews/ana)

MOTORCYCLES AND THE ART OF SADHGURU

Photography Courtesy of Isha Foundation



Intro by
Ankita Sontakke
@sontakkeankita

I was a small 14-year-old girl in Aurangabad, India, when I first saw Sadhguru on TV.

I remember vividly, he had won an award for implementing positive environmental changes, but he was also talking about spirituality. Listening to him talk, I was instantly motivated to get involved and do my part for the environment.

I also knew right away that he was someone who could teach me how to meditate. I was into journaling and meditation at the time, but something struck me as different about Sadhguru. I had never before seen a guru talking about science, spirituality and cosmos all together... in English.



While growing up, I continued to listen to Sadhguru's profound teachings. Reflecting back, I can see that I took two major life-lessons from him:

Exploration & The State of Not-Knowing

Sadhguru set an example for me and my family, to be open to exploring before settling down with a career option.

Sadhguru talks a lot about open-mindedness. The way he puts it: knowing that you don't know everything opens up the gates of possibilities, while if you think that you know it all, you become egoistic and defensive.

When he was young, Sadhguru's family expected him to become a doctor, but he completely refused. Sometimes, he used to just stare at things like ants, leaves, and water and wonder about how they worked. I think, throughout his life, he was a kid at heart that always preferred to give and reflect within himself.

Sadhguru's example had a great impact on me as well as my family. My interest in exploring nature was validated by Sadhguru, as he always encouraged people to go out and live life to the fullest. That is how my parents became open to allowing me to pursue my interests and hobbies,

instead of pushing me to focus solely on making money.

In India, most kids are expected to study hard and get into science or medical college to become engineers or doctors. Sadhguru talks about learning as a continuous process, rather than just something that you do when you're in school. Thanks to these teachings, my family let me explore and learn, instead of pushing me down a path that wasn't really best for me. I learned to play badminton, tennis, chess, carrom (an Indian board game which trains your focusing skills), skating, and even computer games.

While studying engineering, I found that when I combined my analytical skills with my newfound creative thinking skills, I could create great career options for myself that were "outside the box" of traditional Indian parents' expectations. I ended up specializing in marketing, which brought me to exotic places like Scotland, Paris and Great Britain.

After graduating, I got a well-paying job, but I decided to leave after three months because I felt tied up.

Now I am working for myself, blogging, constantly learning and writing about it, doing great projects, meeting new people, and I am even planning to travel to New Zealand in

the near future. I am also working on building a team and slowly turning my work into something big.

Today, I feel like I am where I am supposed to be. I would never have gotten to this point if I didn't consider Sadhguru's teachings about the art of being in a constant state of learning and exploration.

The Universe Within

A lifetime of exploration has developed an immense curiosity in me.

When you are in a state of not-knowing, you are in a state of constant awareness. In daily life, self-awareness keeps you grounded and composed. And when you look deeper, self-awareness opens the gates to the Universe.

There is a perfect symmetry in the Universe and in the inner workings of the body. Our bodies are made of the same atoms that compose the Universe.

As human beings, we are a minute part of this Universe, but at the same time, we carry immense potential within.

If you are able to "clean your lenses," and see the world without a filter, you will get to see the true beauty of the environment, the world, and the Universe around you.

“This is not about being superhuman – this is about realizing that being human is super!”





SADHGURU’S EPIC ADVENTURE

Sadhguru is the coolest yogi in the modern world.

Born in 1957 in Mysore in southern India, young Jaggi Vasudev was a businessman first and a yogi second. He practiced meditation & yoga, but it wasn’t really at the center of his life. One day that all changed, when he rode his motorbike up Chamundi Hill, sat on a rock, and had a life-changing spiritual experience.

 **Sadhguru:** “One afternoon, I rode up Chamundi Hill in Mysore city and went to a particular rock — a huge rock which was my usual place — and sat there with my eyes open. After a few minutes, I didn’t know where I was.

“Till that moment, like most people, I always thought, ‘this is me and that is someone else.’ But for the first time I did not know what is me and what is not me. What was me was spread all over the place. I thought this madness lasted for 5 to 10 minutes but when I came back to my normal way of being, four-and-a-half hours had passed. I was sitting right there, fully conscious, eyes open. I sat there at around 3:00 in the afternoon. It was 7:30 in the evening when I

came out of it. For the first time in my adult life, tears were flowing to a point where my shirt was completely wet. I was someone who had never allowed a single teardrop to come out of my eyes. But now suddenly, tears were flowing to a point where my shirt became wet.

“I had always been happy, that was never an issue for me. I was successful with what I was doing. I was young and had no problems, but now I was bursting with another kind of ecstasy which was indescribable. Every cell in my body was just bursting with ecstasy. I had no words. When I shook my head and tried to ask my skeptical mind, ‘What’s happening to me,’ the only thing that my mind could tell me was, ‘Maybe you are going off your rocker.’ I didn’t care what it was but I didn’t want to lose it because this was the most beautiful thing that I had ever touched. I had never imagined that a human being could ever feel like this within himself.

“The next time this happened was very significant because there were people around me. I was sitting with my family at the dinner table. I actually thought 2 minutes had passed but actually seven hours had gone by. I was



sitting right there fully alert but I had no sense of time. This happened many times. Once, this experience happened for 13 days. In about six week's time, it became like a living reality and everything about me changed in those six weeks. My voice changed, the shape of my eyes changed. If you see photos of me during that time, you can clearly see something changed dramatically in the body. I knew I had to do something, but I didn't know what. All I knew was the blissfulness that was simply bursting within me; and I knew it could happen in every human being. Every human being has the same inner ingredient. This is possible for every human being.

"It is my wish and my blessing this must happen to you. Whether you climb Mount Everest or not, whether you become the richest man on this planet or not, your experience of life on this planet should be pleasant. You must live blissfully and go. This much should happen to every human being. Everyone deserves it and everyone is capable of it."

"The only thing I know for sure is this piece of life, from its origin to its ultimate."

While many Gurus come from religious traditions, Sadhguru is not affiliated with any belief system. This is why he called himself "Sadhguru," which means "Uneducated Guru" or "Self-Taught Guru."

Sadhguru: "When someone comes from their scholarship, they are referred to in different ways. If someone comes from an inner experience, they are referred to as Sadhguru. The word "Sadhguru" is not a title. It is a description. Sadhguru means "uneducated Guru." I am almost a hundred percent spiritually uneducated. I don't know any scriptures, I have not read the Vedas and I didn't bother to read the Bhagavad Gita. I come only from my inner experience, and the only thing I know for sure is this piece of life, from its origin to its ultimate."



Sadhguru now offers teachings of Self Transformation with Yogic science for a contemporary mind. Which is why anyone and everyone who has an urge to look deeper within themselves can appreciate his thoughts and well-considered ideas.

Sadhguru has been an influential voice at major global forums including the United Nations and the World Economic Forum. He has also been invited to speak at leading educational institutions, including Oxford, London Business School, IMD, Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Wharton and MIT.

During the pandemic, from 18th September to 26th October 2020, Sadhguru surprised Americans with a 9477-mile motorcycle trip spanning nineteen of the United States.

His intention for the trip was simple: to absorb Native American culture, while riding a bike on the roads... exploring and experiencing the USA while enjoying the fresh air!

Kevin Ellerton, the founder of Meditation Magazine, was excited to get on a call with Sadhguru to ask about his experiences of the thirty-six-day road trip:

A CONVERSATION WITH SADHGURU



Kevin: You’ve been traveling around the United States on a motorcycle. We have a word for that here... it’s called “badass.” You just went up like ten levels of cool in the American public’s eyes. What were your favorite places and experiences along the way?



Sadhguru: Just now, within the last three days, I made a painting of Mato Tipila in Wyoming. I think the white people call it The Devil’s Tower. I’m telling you, it’s a “must visit” place. The rocks have just risen. It looks almost like some celestial tree. It looks like a tree stump, but a massive one, rising hundreds of feet above the ground. And it is so very powerful. I never expected such a place that is so fantastic. And that is the place that every year in the month of June for the (Summer) Solstice, the sun dance happens... and I’m hoping I will be there for the next sun dance. It’s absolutely an incredible place. I just made a painting of it that I just finished yesterday. I will ask them to send you a picture.

Kevin: I’ve heard that Sedona, Arizona is full of powerful energies. Did you feel that in Sedona?



Sadhguru: Yes. In some parts of Western Sedona, the red rocks exude fantastic energy. Not the way people talk about vortexes. I don’t really see it that way. But I found Mato Tipila, probably the most prominent place that has taken my consciousness. It’s amazing because it just grabbed me so strongly.

Kevin: What other places did you find to be powerful aside from Devil’s Tower?

Sadhguru: That whole belt from Montana down to Nevada, and further down a little bit in Arizona also... what I saw there was absolutely incredible. I’m thinking about spending some time in these places and maybe write about it because it’s amazing. It’s just amazing.

There are some strange things happening even in the Grand Canyon area. We just went one level down and the energies are unbelievable. But the energy can be different ways. There are simply bursting energies in some places. In some places the energy has a certain level of discretion. We can say it’s a little more intelligent energy. There is discretion to it. **Usually in India we consecrate places like that.**



AN ASIDE ABOUT PSYCHEDELICS

My ears perked up. Gears started turning in my head as my inner anthropologist started drawing parallels to the sacred sites of Native American culture

Fascinating! Both Indian and Native American cultures *consecrate* beautiful natural places as sacred sites. Why might these two cultures have evolved such similar relationships with their natural environments? What else do these two cultures have in common?

Earlier in the interview, before talking about Sadhguru’s motorcycle trip, our conversation had briefly meandered into the topic of psychedelic drugs, like cannabis, ayahuasca and psilocybin, their usefulness on the spiritual path, and their effects on Native American cultures.

I had expressed my opinion that entheogenic substances can have positive impacts on culture and spirituality, but Sadhguru disagreed:

Sadhguru: “If you try to force an experience upon yourself, what will you do? You will drink alcohol, or you will drug, or you will fornicate. Because you want a quick experience of something. I’m not even trying to morally judge all those things. I’m not somebody who looks at it morally. All I’m saying is, it’s not sustainable. None of those things.

“Now suppose I teach you a way where you can sit here, and your chemistry is absolutely blissful, and every cell in your body bursting with ecstasy. If I teach you a simple method with which you can make your chemistry like that, do you want to drink or drug or anything? No. Because your own chemistry, the most complex chemical system is here, but you’re taking some rudimentary stuff from outside.

“Today, there are universities starting the Inner Engineering practices. What they have come up with is, they’re saying the BDNF factors, the Brain Develop Neurotrophic Factors, have gone 70% in three months of practice. And the endocannabinoids which determine the blissfulness of your experience go up 70% in three months of practice. So 70% increase in your endocannabinoids means, if you look at me, if you look at my eyes, I’m always stoned! I’m always stoned because the whole system is full of that! It is just activating things from within you — you are

[already] equipped with everything. [It’s better than] taking things from outside.

“I think New York State has made it legal now for you.

Kevin: “They’re starting, yeah.”

Sadhguru: “You watch this: right now marijuana becomes legal, and probably by 2030 to 2035 cocaine will become legal. I think in Oregon it’s medically legal.”

Kevin: “Yeah. In Oregon everything is legal now, but they’re treating it as a health issue rather than as a law enforcement issue which means that if people have a problem, if people are sick, they can go to a doctor or psychologist rather than going to jail. I think that’s a good thing.”

Sadhguru: “It’s a good thought, but that’s not how life works.

“What will happen is, if you just look at America, how it was 120 years ago, it was really nothing. The last three or four generations of people really worked their life out and built this nation. Now, if half the people go on drugs and all they want to do is sit peacefully in one place, they can’t do anything, they can’t really create anything, well, you’ll be taking the nation down.

“America is what it is because of the last three or four generations of people who really, really worked hard.”

Kevin: “True. That’s why there was a lot of opposition to things like marijuana, decades ago. People said, “Who will pull the plows and till the fields? Who will do the work if everybody is just stoned and watching TV?” I think that’s reasonable. It’s an important insight. I think medi-

tation obviously is a very deep thing and you’ve been doing it a lot longer than I have, but I don’t think that--”

Sadhguru: “There’s a fundamental difference. If you’re drugged, it may also give you a blissful trip, but you will become ineffective in the world. But if you become blissful and peaceful because of meditateness, you will become super effective in the world. That is the big difference.”

Kevin: “That’s totally true. I think that for me, meditation has made me more peaceful and blissful, but also more effective in the world. And I think that is a big difference from some drugs. But I do think that there are some drugs that may be helpful to people, like psychedelics. Like ayahuasca and mushrooms and peyote and things like that. What are your thoughts on that? I’d love to get your take on something that doesn’t stone you, but just gives you insight. “

Sadhguru: “People believe all Native Americans were on drugs. It’s not true. It’s only a few tribes from the South, Mexican tribes, and further south in South America. That’s also just a few tribes, and not all of them. Now it is being made to look like all Native Americans were on peyote or ayahuasca. It’s not true.

“I’m not saying something will not give you a possibility [of benefit]. It may. But I’m saying that, if your idea of being peaceful is to just sit in one corner in a comfortable chair, simply sit there dazed out a little bit... maybe your experience is good. But is that the way to explore human potential?”

I was surprised to hear that Sadhguru sees psychedelics as something that is harmful to cultures and civilizations. I understood his points about sitting around and doing nothing in a blissed-out state, but from my understanding, entheogens like peyote and ayahusca have been a part of the spiritual evolution of Native American cultures, and the beautiful wisdom that they brought into the western world.



Terence McKenna during a panel discussion at the 1999 AllChemical Arts Conference, held at Kona, Hawaii.

PHOTOGRAPHY: TERENCE MCKENNA BY JON HANNA. SADHGURU BY ISHA FOUNDATION

So when Sadhguru mentioned, during our conversation about his motorcycle adventure, that beautiful natural places in India are *consecrated* as sacred sites, I couldn’t help but see the parallels with Native American cultures. In the next moment, my brain made two more connections: Both cultures (Indian and Native American) have deep spiritual roots, and long histories of co-evolution with entheogenic plants.

Terence McKenna, the 20th century psychedelic ethnobotanist, proposed in his 1992 book “The Food of The Gods” that human religions, spiritual traditions, and even civilizations can trace their origins back to massive leaps in the evolution of consciousness, from early hominids ingesting psilocybin by accidentally eating magic mushrooms. This idea is now known as the “Stoned Ape Hypothesis,” popularized in recent years by Graham Hancock and others.

Personally, as an anthropologist by training and a psychonaut by inclination, I really like this hypothesis as well. Is it actually true? I have no idea. But it makes a hell of a lot of sense to me, and I think it would make for a pretty epic origin story for humanity.

So I had to ask:

Kevin: “You mentioned that in India they consecrate [beautiful natural places like the Grand Canyon]. Native American cultures also consecrate those sites. In contrast, the white people who came from Europe and took over the Americas, they tend to have a different attitude. It’s more like “Let’s mine this. Let’s get oil out of that. Let’s take what we can out of this.”

“So it’s interesting to me that earlier in our conversation, you were talking about the need to “do things” and “move forward” and “be productive,” rather than just sitting in a state of bliss.

“Do you think that there is some benefit to the ways in which Native American cultures used psychedelics like Peyote and Ayahuasca, and just sort of sat in that state of blissful consciousness, and were therefore able to recognize the spiritual importance of those sacred sites?

“In early India, people were utilizing psychedelics like Cannabis as well. Cannabis started growing in Northern India. There is even a ritual Hindu cannabis drink called bhang. Some people believe that these types of substances actually sparked humanity to become more con-



scious, and actually create civilizations like the Indian civilization and others.

“I wonder if both the Indians and the Native Americans were able to perceive the energies of these places, and end up consecrating them as sacred sites, in part, because of the kind of consciousness that was sparked by these substances. Do you think there’s any truth to that?”

Sadhguru: “No. You’re reading books written by people who have a compulsive need for such things.

“I’m not somebody who judges people morally. If somebody wants to smoke they can smoke. But there are millions of cannabis receptors in your body which don’t ask you to smoke. You can generate them within the body. The endocannabinoids go up by 70% when you practice 90 days of Inner Engineering with certain processes and techniques. When you’re able to generate it within, it’s like you have two legs to walk which comes naturally.

But smoking is like somebody is walking with a crutch, and that guy starts writing books on philosophy: “A crutch is the best way to walk! Everybody must walk with a crutch. It is soooo good. It is wonderful.” Then everyone will start walking with crutches. You can do that... but I’ll walk on my two legs. I like it this way.”

Kevin: “I understand. There are some American philosophers and deep spiritual teachers like Ram Dass and

Alan Watts who put it in a certain way, especially Alan Watts. He had this phrase “When you get the message [from LSD], hang up the phone.” And there is another saying: “LSD can fly you by the top of the mountain in a helicopter, but in order to stay there you need to make the arduous trek yourself.” Do you think there is any value in that?”

While refraining from talking specifically about LSD as a Helicopter, Sadhguru came back with a solid point about using meditation in a similar way:

Sadhguru: People come for [our] four day program. There is such a cleansing where it’s like a total overhaul. There are no drugs. There are no weeds. There is no anything. Just certain processes and meditations which will activate this in such a way that people will get cured, people will get cleansed, and you will see people come out like delirious, and they’re still like that for a few months!

So I’m telling them, “See, this is like a trampoline.” I’m giving you a trampoline experience because I want you to see what’s on the other side of the wall. Once you’ve seen that, I believe you’ll have hunger to climb the wall.

The next program is not such an experiential program, but we will help you learn how to build a ladder. It’s not romantic work. There is nothing romantic about building a ladder, but it gets you across.

“That whole belt from Montana down to Nevada, and further down a little bit in Arizona also... what I saw there was absolutely incredible. I’m thinking about spending some time in these places and maybe write about it because it’s amazing. It’s just amazing.”

World famous Indian spiritual teacher Sadhguru rode 9,477 miles across the United States during the pandemic, in an epic motorcycle tour of sacred sites and beautiful landscapes.



Kevin: In America, bikers are usually these burly guys who like to fight and curse and drink a lot of alcohol...

Sadhguru: Those are not motorcycles, they're cars cut in half. I was riding a real motorcycle. [Laughter]

Kevin: You don't believe in Harleys? You like the ones where you have to lean over?

Sadhguru: No, Harleys are okay because they're big, and in America, with open road and lots of wind, I think [a Harley] handles that well. But it doesn't feel like a motorcycle. Maybe some models do, but the big ones are like you cut the car in half. It has enough metal to make a car. I am not against any brand, but personally I cannot ride them, because for me a two-wheeler means it has to be nimble. Nimbleness is simply absent in [Harleys].

Kevin: What is it about nimbleness that you like?

Sadhguru: One thing is its agility. I sometimes rode for 24hrs, day and night. In the United States the big problem is the deer hits. If you hit a deer on a motorcycle, that's the end of it. I had



a small skirmish with one of the deers, but we managed the trip well.

But that is a very dangerous thing, because especially in that region, Wyoming and Montana, every night there are four to five deer kills by trucks and cars. And if you happen to hit one on a motorcycle, that's the end of you. That is the most important thing about motorcycling for me is ceaseless alertness, relentless alertness. If you're not alert you won't live. I like that [laughter].

Kevin: Yeah, it really keeps you on the edge of the present moment, it really keeps you Here. That was one of the things that I really liked about motorcycles until I broke my neck in a motorcycle accident in Thailand. Just be careful on those motorcycles Sadhguru. I know you already are.

I used to really love the rush and the freedom, and the feeling of being present. Maybe that's one of the things that you like about it too. But would you not consider that to be almost like another form of a drug?

Sadhguru: But you're not going to live on a motorcycle for the rest of your life! You only ride and you get off, right? If you can drug and then get off when you feel like it, that would be okay, but you can't get off. That's the problem.

Kevin: What was it like riding through the United States in the pandemic? Were you afraid of getting sick? Were people concerned?

KEVIN:

"In America, bikers are usually these burly guys who like to fight and curse and drink a lot of alcohol..."

SADHGURU:

"Those are not motorcycles, they're cars cut in half. I was riding a real motorcycle."

Sadhguru: We had a team of 17 people, including me 18 people, and not a single one of us got sick, because we have clear cut protocols for how we should do things. For example here in ISHA foundation center, we have over 4300 people, and not a single infection until now, in the last 11 months, because our protocols are so well-followed by everybody. There is no better way to be socially distant than being on a motorcycle.

Kevin: Yeah, motorcycles and meditations are good ways to be socially distancing.

There are some people here in the United States that do not believe that the coronavirus is real, they think that it's a fake thing. The reason I mention this to you is that I think a lot of people in the spiritual and hippie community, you'd be surprised by how many of them believe that it's





“I sometimes rode for 24 hours, day and night.”

not real or that it’s exaggerated, because they have a very strong distrust of the government. Do you have anything that you could say to them to make them rethink that, or are you on that same thought process?

Sadhguru: There is enough information everywhere, but in spite of that, if people believe that, me saying something won’t help. They must consult the dead people.

Kevin: Yeah, that’s true.

Sadhguru: They must consult them and they will get an appropriate answer.

Kevin: Yeah, that’s true. My family knows a lot of people who have died and thankfully everyone in my family has been socially distancing since the beginning so we’ve been okay.

Sadhguru: Every day. Every day at least 10 to 15 people that I know throughout the world are dying. Every day a minimum of 10 to 15 people. People keep telling me “my uncle died, my aunt died, my mother died, my father died.” So you consult those people, then they will tell you. Isha foundation runs many crematoriums in India. The number of bodies that are coming during the pandemic almost tripled what was normal.

Kevin: Did you have any difficult or intense experiences when you were travelling around the country?

Sadhguru: Not really, except that we could not enter many Native American reserves. We had to ask them to come out and meet because the reserves were going through a very severe level of pandemic infection so we could not enter. Many of them were blocked. That was one problem.

Kevin: Do you feel like they shouldn’t have been shut down?

Sadhguru: No. They had to shut down. The number of people dying in the Native American reserves is way higher than the normal population. I fear for the safety of those people. They had to shut down.

It was inconvenient for us but it doesn’t matter. First of all, I got the time to travel only because of the pandemic; otherwise my schedule won’t allow me to make that 36-day motorcycle trip.

Another really difficult thing that we faced is, once in South Dakota and once when I was just entering Los Angeles... there was a storm.

The winds were blowing about 50 miles per hour, gusting around 55 miles per hour. And particularly my motorcycle — I don’t know if it’s the way the windshield was placed or something — it was really hard to keep the motorcycle on the road. It

was tilting at 15 to 18 degrees off the center, and to keep it on the road I had to keep the motorcycle like that continuously. Sometimes when a truck comes, the front wheel would just lift up!

So I am riding and it’s, like, really blowing me away. All that time my audio recorder was connected to me with a microphone and all that. So I just laughed. All the experience that I have on a motorcycle, and I am struggling to keep the damn thing on the road. And then I laughed, and then I said, “If this is the last chuckle you hear, just know I went laughing.” [Laughter]

So later on they were typing this audio and they were saying “Sadhguru, how could you do this? Why don’t you stop?” That is one thing I don’t know.

I’m just using all my experience and trying to hold it on the road but it was really lifting, and almost like the motorcycle was wanting to fly away from the road. The motorcycle weighs 350 kilograms, but in spite of that, in that wind... whoa, it was something. [Laughing]

For more information on Inner Engineering, Isha Foundation’s Flagship inner wellbeing program, visit innerengineering.com



TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW, JUST POINT YOUR SMARTPHONE CAMERA AT THIS QR CODE, OR CHECK MEDITATIONMAG.COM/INTERVIEWS/SADHGURU





NATURE
is the
GREATEST
GURU

PHOTO: MICHAEL BLOCK

Meditate in Nature

With the world in pandemic, with parties and offices and meditation studios closed, what better time to go outside and soak in the natural beauty of Planet Earth?

The Japanese art of Shinrin-Yoku, or “Forest Bathing,” has been shown in multiple studies to reduce stress & anxiety, increase happiness & creativity, and more!

Even in cities, you can find a slice of nature, in a park, on a roof or by the water, and soak up some of that big blue and white sky.

If you happen to be stuck inside, fear not! Studies have shown that even looking out the window or gazing at nature scenes can have similar effects.

Take a few moments to gaze at the beauty of Planet Earth on the following pages. Then, if you can, go outside.

*Leave the phone at home.
Bring the mag if you want.*

PHOTO: SIMON RAE IN MANLY BEACH, AUSTRALIA





**"And into the forest I go,
To lose my mind
And find my soul."**

- JOHN MUIR -

**“We live in a
Beautiful world.”**

- CHRIS MARTIN -

PHOTO: ARCHIE BINAMIRA IN CAMALIG, PHILIPPINES

Like termite mounds & anthills,
human cities are natural phenomena;
glowing mountain ranges built by
primates, upon the Earth, beneath
the sky.

If all you have around you are urban
landscapes, you can still marvel at
the beauty of the natural world. All it
takes is a shift in perspective.



PHOTO: SANAAN MAZHAR

GRAHAM HANCOCK

WINNING THE WAR ON CONSCIOUSNESS

IT ALL STARTED WITH AN INNOCENT TED TALK. When he told the story of his own personal Ayahuasca experiences, and asserted that control of one's own consciousness is a basic human right, Graham Hancock was met with fascination and applause. But when he started talking about the healing effects of psychedelics, his TED talk was attacked & removed from the platform.

Interview by Forrest Neal. Photography by Santha Faiia.



We are living through a time of unprecedented isolation. With billions of people spending long periods of time in quarantine to stay safe during the pandemic, many have been forced to look inward for comfort.

This period of solitude is a radical departure from the continuous activity & consumption that many in our culture have become accustomed to. As a result, we have seen a concurrent mental-health pandemic of anxiety, depression, and suicide beyond anything we've experienced before as a civilization.

Despite the chaos and confusion of our current predicament, a medical revolution is quietly dawning that may save countless lives from suicide, and may even prevent another global catastrophe like this from ever happening again.



As of this writing in early 2021, the state of Oregon has legalized Psilocybin (the naturally occurring psychedelic compound found in over 200 species of fungi) for therapeutic use. Several other US cities have decriminalized Psilocybin and other psychedelics, and the majority of US states have legalized cannabis in one form or another.

These are giant leaps away from the decades-long push to disparage all uncommercialized consciousness-altering substances in our government, schools, and media, culminating in Richard Nixon's violent & deadly "war on drugs" which started way back in 1971 and continues, in many states and countries around the world, to this day.

Reminiscent of the hippie revolution in the 1960's and 70's in which

people began questioning, pushing back against the status quo, and experimenting with altered states of consciousness, many people are now referring to the widespread legalization of psychedelic entheogens as the "hippie revolution 2.0" and even "The Great Awakening."

Graham Hancock, the New York Times best-selling author of *America Before: The Key To Earth's Lost Civilization*, with more than 7 million copies of his books sold, gave a TEDx Talk entitled *The War On Consciousness* that was censored by TED (and eventually reinstated) on the subject of psychedelics and the war on consciousness.

The following is a partial transcript of a conversation I had with Graham while synchronistically watching a beautiful glowing sunrise over the Great Plains of Colorado.



Graham Hancock: "I've always felt that what an adult individual does in the private sanctum of his or her own mind and consciousness is none of the business of the state, and is entirely that of the individual, so long as the individual does no harm to others."

In his censored TEDx Talk, Graham also highlights the history of psychedelic plant medicine use in ancient cultures, and the significance it had in the lives that they lived.

Graham: "We're beginning to realize that [psychedelics] have an incredible

"I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT WHAT AN ADULT INDIVIDUAL DOES IN THE PRIVATE SANCTUM OF HIS OR HER OWN MIND AND CONSCIOUSNESS IS NONE OF THE BUSINESS OF THE STATE, AND IS ENTIRELY THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL"

**"WE'RE BEGINNING
TO REALIZE THAT
PSYCHEDELICS HAVE
AN INCREDIBLE
POTENTIAL FOR
HEALING, INCREDIBLE
POTENTIAL FOR THE
INTEGRATION OF THE
SELF, FOR BREAKING
US OUT OF RUTS AND
HABITS THAT WE
MAY HAVE GOTTEN
STUCK IN"**

potential for healing, incredible potential for the integration of the self, for breaking us out of ruts and habits that we may have gotten stuck in. They are incredibly helpful in lots of ways. And of course, ancient civilizations knew this."

With more and more data coming in from studies of psychedelic medicines like Psilocybin, it's becoming apparent, even in the mainstream scientific community, that these substances can function in similar ways to the mass-produced pharmaceuticals used to treat illnesses and diseases today. A Johns Hopkins University study lead by Alan K. Davis, PhD, Frederick S. Barrett, PhD, and Darrick G. May, MD, found that "psilocybin-assisted therapy was efficacious in producing large, rapid, and sustained antidepressant effects in patients with major depressive disorder."

Another study led by Harvard Professor Sara Lazar, PhD, found that structural differences in the brain are detectable within eight weeks following the participation in a mindfulness training program. This study validates for many people the anecdotal reports of psychedelic-like experiences that take place in deep meditation!

There is, however, still resistance to these findings. This is not surprising, considering our culture's historical reluctance and slowness when it comes to admitting that we might possibly have been wrong about something.

It was only a few hundred years ago that Galileo proposed that the Earth revolves around the sun... and was accused of heresy and threatened with torture to force him to recant. It may surprise you, but the Catholic Church didn't officially admit he was right (and therefore "not guilty") until October of 1992!

It wasn't until the mid-1800's that Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis proposed that hand-washing might prevent illness. At the time, a large percentage of women were dying after giving birth. Semmelweis's theory was that doctors were transferring "cadaveric matter" to women who were giving birth, because they went straight into the delivery room after performing autopsies, without washing their hands. Semmelweis recommended that doctors should wash their hands using a chlorine and lime solution

between autopsies and deliveries. Even with so many mothers losing their lives, doctors at the time were highly resistant to the possibility that hand washing might prevent deaths in the future. After all, that would mean that they were admitting partial responsibility for the deaths that had taken place previously!

Graham: "If you support a particular idea for decades and decades, you become exponentially connected to that idea. What threatens that idea is taken as a personal threat on yourself."

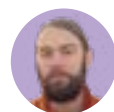
In much the same way, the mainstream scientific community has brushed aside Graham's evidence of civilization-ending cataclysmic events that may have happened in the past. Ironically, this rejection is now happening at a time in which we are currently living through one of the





most cataclysmic events the modern world has ever known.

In Graham's book *America Before: The Key To Earth's Lost Civilization*, he discusses the evidence of cataclysmic events that took place thousands of years ago and likely crippled any human civilization that may have been around at that time.



Forrest Neal: Obviously, the world is in an incredibly chaotic circumstance right now with the global pandemic and mental health crisis in America. With the research you have done, would you say that we are standing at the edge of another cataclysmic event such as what these ancient cultures are saying happened in the past and may likely happen again?

Graham: "When we look at thousands of so-called myths and

traditions that speak of the destruction of a former civilization, what you will find that many of those stories have in common is that there was some failure or fall in the civilization concerned such that it ceased to live up to its potential.

"They may have ceased to 'wear their prosperity with moderation' (a phrase used by the Greek philosopher Plato when describing the fall of an Atlantean civilization). In other words, they became conceited, big headed, proud... they began to impose their power around the world, and they began to make war.

"The Atlantis story makes it clear that this is why the universe turned on them. This also isn't just the Atlantis story, this is many many other traditions and stories of lost civilizations from all around the world.

"So in mythological terms, I would say that we do check all the boxes for the next lost civilization."

Forrest: Do you believe that psychedelics and other natural exercises like yoga and meditation can provide scientists and politicians in power with the ability to make the transition away from dogmatic ways of thinking into more open minded perspectives, so that we may prevent our possible self destruction from taking place?

Graham: "In a word... YES."

While writing this article, it was announced that the Johns Hopkins Psychedelic Research study on participants with MDD became the most popular study viewed in JAMA Psychiatry in 2020, which is one of the most prestigious journals in the field of Psychiatry. With the support of unconventional thinkers and medical research, we are beginning to unwind decades of misinformation about psychedelic plant medicines and therapeutic exercises. With widespread acceptance, these powerful plants may save many lives, help many people who are in desperate need, and possibly even save our entire civilization from the types of cataclysmic events that ancient cultures have been writing about for thousands of years.



TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS QR CODE, OR CHECK IT OUT ON [MEDITATIONMAG.COM/INTERVIEWS/GRAHAM-HANCOCK!](https://meditationmag.com/interviews/graham-hancock/)

"IF YOU SUPPORT A PARTICULAR IDEA FOR DECADES, AND DECADES, YOU BECOME EXPONENTIALLY CONNECTED TO THAT IDEA. WHAT THREATENS THAT IDEA IS TAKEN AS A PERSONAL THREAT ON YOURSELF."

THE UNITED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

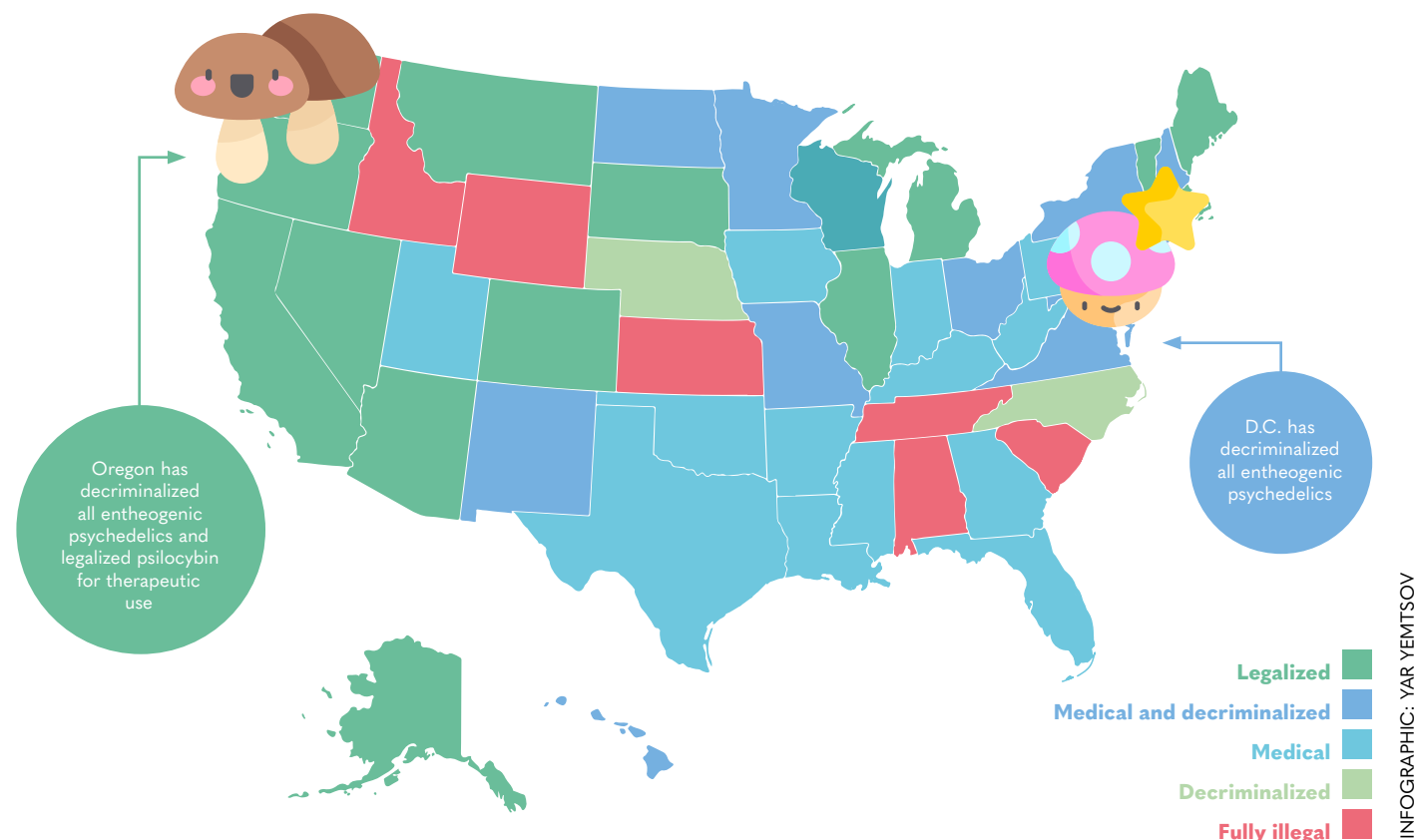
Like meditation, psychedelic drugs have the power to expand your consciousness and give you access to peak states of human experience.

In this groundbreaking issue, we've heard some polar opposite opinions, for and against the legalization of consciousness-altering drugs.

Sadhguru (along with many Buddhists), has argued that using drugs is a harmful crutch, and that legalization will be detrimental to society. Graham Hancock, on the other hand (along with many modern psychonauts, and some ancient ones as well), theorized that, far from being

harmful to society, psychedelic entheogens may have given birth to human intelligence, spirituality, and civilization in the first place!

Whether you're Team Hancock or Team Sadhguru, one thing is clear. The war on consciousness-expanding drugs in America is coming to an end. There are only six states left that don't have some form of legal cannabis (shown in red below). And in Oregon, Washington DC, and a few other cities, psychedelics like psilocybin are now decriminalized and/or legal to use in therapy sessions! Our map below shows the State of consciousness, as of February 2021.



THE POLITICS OF EGO 🤨

Itend to avoid watching the propaganda— *cough* —I mean news channels. But sometimes when I walk past a TV that's blaring CNN or Fox News, or some other similar channel, I hear the same words over and over and over again... just repeated in different orders.

Unsurprisingly, the words “Democrats” and “Republicans” are among the most common that I hear as I pass through living rooms, lobbies and office hallways. “Democrats say *this*. Republicans think *that*. The Democrats want to do *this*. The Republicans are trying to do *that*.”

The thing that strikes me is not the repetitiveness itself, but the intent behind it. Constant repetition of an us-versus-them narrative is an age-old technique to turn people into followers by solidifying their egos.

“There is nothing that strengthens the ego more than being right. Being right is identification with a mental position — a perspective, an opinion, a judgement, a story. For you to be right, of course, you need someone else to be wrong, as so the ego loves to make wrong in order to be right.”
 — Eckhart Tolle

The idea here behind this type of messaging is to solidify your position on Team Blue or Team Red. “I” am a

Democrat, or “I” am a Republican. It gives you yet another characteristic by which you can describe and differentiate your “self.”

The problem here becomes very obvious when you have experienced the Enlightenment of meditation. In meditation, you begin to feel connected with the Universe, rather than separate from it. You begin to feel your unity with everyone around you, rather than your divisions.

Ego is all about differentiation & separateness. The more you can differentiate yourself from others, the more you feel unique, as an “individual.” But this type of egocentric differentiation leads to feelings of alienation, disconnectedness, paranoia and hostility. On a larger scale, it leads to tribalism, nationalism, and even war.

Recent world events have brought to light the fascinating phenomenon of “grievance addiction.” During the 2020 US election, James Kimmel Junior (psychology lecturer at Yale University) published an article about the neuroscience of grievances, wherein he draws a biological parallel between grievances and addictive drugs:

“Recent studies show that, [like addictive drugs,] cues such as

experiencing or being reminded of a perceived wrong or injustice — a grievance — activate the same reward and habit regions of the brain [as addictive drugs], triggering cravings in anticipation of experiencing pleasure and relief through retaliation. To be clear, the retaliation doesn't need to be physically violent — an unkind word, or tweet, can also be very gratifying.”

Let's try a little experiment.

Instead of streaming hostility and “righteous” anger into your brain from the “news” channels, let's take a collective step back. Let's try feeding our brains with something else for a week, and try looking at “the other team” as part of our beautiful, loving Human Family.

See how it feels, as an experiment. And let us know how it goes!



GROWING UP WITH GURUS

A Podcast with Laura Hof, Mallika Chopra & Mark Watts

Words by Kevin Ellerton



I've been fortunate enough to interview some amazing gurus in my life, from Wim Hof to Deepak Chopra to Sadhguru, Rachel Brathen, Shinge Roshi, and many more. But I've never enjoyed an interview as much as my podcast with Laura, Mallika, and Mark.

It wasn't just that they brought together three of the biggest names in the meditation world (their fathers Wim Hof, Deepak Chopra, and Alan Watts are among the most popular spiritual teachers of the past century). It was their unique perspective on the humans behind the gurus - what they were like at home, as parents, and how they affected their children growing up.

Here are ten key takeaways from our conversation:

1. Don't talk about one thing while thinking about something else.

I was hoping to kick off our podcast with a breathwork from Laura Hof, to get us all buzzing, in the mood for an energized & uninhibited conversation. But due to a time-zone mix-up, Laura was nowhere to be found.

As the stream went live, my mind was still stuck on contacting Laura... but I had to introduce our guests! And thus, I began our conversation by accidentally introducing Mallika Chopra as "the daughter of Wim Hof."

We had a good laugh, but it was a real reminder to be present while speaking: no matter what is going on in the back of your mind, be present with what you are saying.

2. What Deepak was like before and after he got into meditation

Mallika: "As a young kid, my memories are actually of my father as a stressed out, miserable person... and then things changed very dramatically when I was nine years old and he discovered meditation, and connection to spirit, and had a transformation in his personal habits and life, and that created a shift in our family life."

"Alan Watts was one of his heroes. My father was always a philosopher and intellect. But for him, it was when he started practicing meditation and changing habits in his life that he changed, as well as my family life."

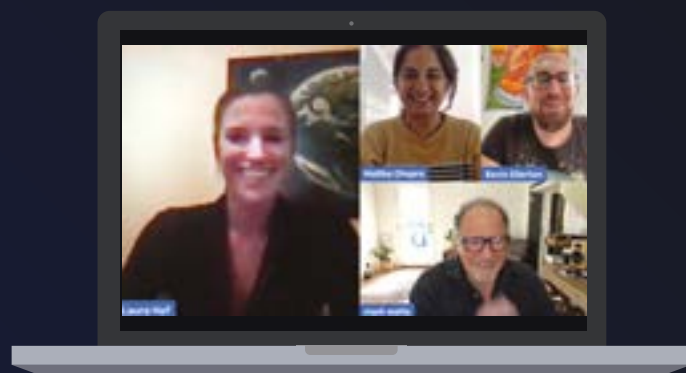


ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK.COM

Later in our conversation, Mallika went into greater detail about Deepak's transformation from doctor to spiritual teacher.

"My dad was a stressed out doctor. He wanted to be a healer, but he wasn't finding that pushing medication and writing prescriptions was the path for him.

"In addition to being tired and overwhelmed, he drank a lot to go to sleep, smoked incessantly. I remember my parents fighting all the time. Fundamentally he was unhappy.

"He had gone with my mom to a lecture by Krishnamurti, one of his last talks, and he had always read Alan Watts and Krishnamurti and all these great teachers, but in that lecture the spark to learn meditation, the curiosity overcame him.

"So he was walking in Cambridge on the street by the TM Center, and he decided to go in and learn how to meditate. And in very typical fashion of my father, that first meditation was like, life changing. I think for the first time he felt silence, connection, a sense of spirit.

"And so he came home and dragged my mom to learn how to meditate... the next day he made his brother learn how to meditate, my mom's sister had to learn, my brother and I had to learn, by the end of the week the entire Indian community in Boston had to learn meditation. He always took everyone along for the ride. But in those 24 hours, he gave up

drinking, he gave up smoking, it was just a complete transformation, in a very dramatic, very typical 'my dad' way."

3. How to deal with internet trolls.

I'd been battling internet trolls for weeks since we started advertising Deepak's cover, and starting to get frustrated. So I asked Mark & Mallika how they deal.

Mark: "The etiquette of internet commenting is atrocious. I track some of these people down because I feel badly about what they've said, and they're perfectly nice people, but they take on a persona on the internet that is very abrasive. I don't really get that."

Mallika: "I don't think it's worth the engagement. They're coming from their place, from their perspective. I think Mark is right, it's part of the anonymity on social media, that people think that they can... I don't mind deleting comments and blocking people, it's fine."

4. The surprising link between Alan Watts's mala beads and Deepak Chopra's glasses.

Mallika: My father knows that the image of who he is, is very different from who he is. He actually plays into it, with the red sparkly glasses, and the sneakers...

Mark: He's having fun. He's playing with it. My father did the same thing. With all the beads... everything came along in the sixties, he said, "Oh,

great!" and he just piled it all on and just thought that was great.

Kevin: Do you feel like that was almost like building an ego for themselves, or more like having a fun dress-up game, to play with the culture?

Mallika: "No, I think my dad just likes being fun."

Mark: "Yeah. There's a definite playfulness to it that my father enjoyed and I can see it in Deepak too. They're having fun with it. I think that there's an element of showmanship, but I don't think that that is intended in any way to connote that they are of a higher authority."

5. What Alan Watts was like off-stage

Mark: "My father's on-stage and off-stage performance was different. Not a lot different, but a little bit different. He liked to put on a good show. He enjoyed it! Off-stage he was the same guy, just more direct, human, and you know, with you."

6. What it's like to grow up with no rules.

Laura: "In my household, everything went. Wim was a fifth kid in the house. But at the same time, he was always just a strange man. He was looked upon as sort of a hippie in the neighborhood. In the winter, he was the one who went out in shorts and sandals and a hawaiian shirt. And that's pretty much how I know my father for my whole life. He has always been very spiritual, doing his

breathing, yoga, and meditation every day. I think that’s one of the reasons that he could be with four children who were really crazy! It was kind of a crazy household, but at the same time beautiful and open and free spirited.

My childhood has been a blessing in that I had no restrictions at all. No rules. Nothing that I had to do. My father always wanted me to be happy. If I was happy, then everything was good. If I was good at school, that was a plus. But there were no rules that I had to adhere to. It was really a very free childhood. I only began to realize later on what “conditioning” really means. Because for me to be open, free, to live my life completely open from the heart, not thinking about what another person thinks... being very truthful and honest with people, loving but very honest... those things are not normal. And I only found out later, when I went into society. It has been a very different childhood if I compare it with other people.

Sometimes I tell my father that I’m so happy he raised us the way he did. Because it makes a person be able to find their own way, much earlier in life.”

Mark: I remember my son saying, ‘Dad should I do my homework now?’ as if he was looking for permission or something. I said, ‘I dunno, it’s your homework, do whatever you want!’ And he was like ‘What?’ And all of a sudden it just clicked, like “Yeah, it’s my homework. Why do I have to talk to you?” And after that, every time he got home he’d just do it immediately, get it out of the way. Empowering your kids is a wonderful thing to do.”

7. A masterful way to show your kids the big picture.

Mark: “When I first moved back to California, I came with my girlfriend. We were in the process of growing apart, and there was a point where that became a little bit traumatic, and dad came down to get the mail, and I mentioned that we were having problems. He didn’t respond to it, but a few minutes later he said “Oh, come with me, I have something I have to show you!”

So we hopped into his Jeep and went down to Sausalito, and went into the Tides Bookstore. And there in the bookstore was a glass case full of the rarest books. But on top of that there were geodes and fossils and all kinds of things lined up. And he went down and said, “Oh, this one, this one!” And he showed me a little village of crustaceans, you know, a fossilized little configuration... and he said:

“Everybody there died more than five million years ago.”

And suddenly I just got it, that this was his commentary on these ‘big problems’ that were consuming my day that day. Which I thought was just brilliant.

8. Why people put spiritual teachers on pedestals

Mark: “The underlying issue is what I would describe as the ‘protestant ethic.’ We think that people who are going to teach us are going to be on a higher spiritual level, and a level of

what I would describe as ‘purity,’ that normal people are not expected to have, or probably be able to achieve.

As my father loved to say, Christ was made irrelevant and ‘kicked upstairs’ through pedestalization! They were able to take him and say “He’s a unique example.” And they pushed him out of the human realm. And I think the same thing goes on with contemporary gurus and teachers.

My father, like Deepak, never held himself up as a guru of any type. He actually did talks about the whole idea of a guru. The most important concept in those talks was that we empower our guru, our gods, whatever we lend authority to. That’s where it gets its authority. There’s no other source of authority other than yourself.

And I think that there’s just a massive cultural confusion around this issue. The idea that somebody who’s a teacher does something that is a little bit untoward, and all of a sudden, everything that they’ve said is meaningless... it’s just nonsense! It just doesn’t take into account human nature.

9. It’s OK to mix money & spirituality.

Kevin: What do you think of the idea that the monetization of spirituality is a bad thing?

Mark: I think it’s another relic of the protestant reformation. That there should be no wealth or anything like that associated with the priesthood, because it’s gonna corrupt them.

A lot of people say to me, “How come you’re charging [for Alan Watts recordings]? Alan would never charge for these things.” Fortunately I’m able to refer to them to a little video on YouTube that’s called ‘Alan Watts Money & Possessions.’ He says ‘A laborer is worthy of his hire. I always charge the best fee I can get, and what I do with the money is none of your business.’

We charge \$380 for the whole collection [on alanwatts.com], which is basically an encapsulation of a man’s whole life work. A day laborer gets that in a day or a day and a half. You’re getting a man’s whole life work for that amount.

Laura: Money is not important at all for my father. When I talk with him about money, you can see that in some way he views money as something he wants to lose as quickly as possible [laughter].

But my brother is just different. He’s very commercially minded, which I think is completely OK. Everybody can do the basics of the Wim Hof Method for free. And that is very important for us as well, that everybody can do it. And that is something that we as a family stand for, and that is something that we will always stand for. Because we see it as something that is helping humanity.

Now, there are certain programs that you can also buy. It’s not necessary though. If you’re very disciplined, you can just do it on your own with the free things that we give. That is, for us, very important.

Money is energy. It’s nothing more than a streaming energy. It’s a currency, it just flows. I don’t see something bad in making money. If in spirituality you cannot make money, you cannot grow either. It takes money, energy current, to grow, and to help more people!”

10. How Wim Hof spends his money

Laura: He will buy the biggest palm tree there is. This is what my father does. He buys the biggest palm tree, or a very big rock, that we are all like, “Why... what is this... it’s a huge rock!” Or the biggest plant. But that is what makes him happy! His garden, his plants, his beautiful rocks.

Mark Watts is currently curating his father’s recordings, which are available for purchase at alanwatts.com. **Mallika** has recently published a series of childrens’ books, including “Just Breathe” and “Just Feel,” and is releasing a new one called “Just Be You” around the time this magazine hits shelves. **Laura** is teaching and popularizing The Wim Hof Method around the world.



OUR TOP 23 GURUS

A Gu Ru is a Dispeller of Darkness, and a role model for how humans can be in this world. We decided to take a few minutes to consider our own gurus, by asking ourselves the following question:

“Which humans have shown me a better way to live... whose example has changed the course of my life for the better?”

When asking ourselves this question, it became immediately apparent that, like Ram Dass said: Everyone is the Guru. We have learned from countless individuals throughout the course of our lives.

So we decided to choose our “Top 5” (or 6 or 7) -- obviously a very personal list, which will be different for every human.

Check out our lists below, and maybe make your own! We limited our own lists to one non-famous person. Because, you know... this is a magazine. Feel free to put as many non-famous people on your own lists as feel right to you.

And here’s a bonus challenge, if you’re up for it: express your gratitude to those people for shaping your life for the better!

PHOTOS: DENNIS SCHONEVELD, EMORY HALL



Jovanna’s top 5

1 Sathya Sai Baba is the one who changed my river’s course. At just 15 years old, he set my soul on fire with an unconditional love I never could have imagined existing in this world. His divinity reached me through a photograph and I was forever changed.

2 Neem Karoli Baba showed me that I don’t have to be so serious all the time. Leela, which means “to play” is a sacred state in and of itself.

3 Amma showed me that love alone can truly change the world. No matter your age, your race, your social standing... with true love in your heart, anything is possible.

4 Rachel Brathen taught me that there is immense strength in vulnerability, in showing others your authentic self.

5 Trevor Hall taught me that when spirit, God, and the Universe are at the center of your heart and your mind, your life’s purpose will become clear in every moment, and you will find the courage to fulfill them.



Kevin's top 7

- 1 **Eckhart Tolle** introduced me to the Present Moment. I will be forever grateful for that.
- 2 **Alan Watts** made me realize that I am The Universe, experiencing Itself. No words.
- 3 **Wim Hof** introduced me to the power of breathwork, and the incredible physical strength that it brings.
- 4 **Elon Musk** showed me that a human can actually succeed at saving humanity on a massive scale while having a sense of humor about it at the same time.
- 5 **Steve Jobs** showed me that meditation, creativity and entrepreneurship really can do huge things in the world, when applied rigorously in daily life.
- 6 **Amma** showed me that humans can change the world on massive scales through pure love, without even trying to self-promote or gain power.
- 7 **My mom** showed me that people can be completely selfless, tirelessly serving others, and boundlessly happy at the same time.



Forrest's top 6

- 1 **Dr. Nena Nimit** saved my life by opening the door to a way of living free of prescription drug use.
- 2 **Ram Dass** revealed to me the life changing experience that's possible by expressing love to people who may have hurt me in the past.
- 3 **Elon Musk** transformed the understanding I had of dreams I once thought were impossible into being highly probable if not inevitable events.
- 4 **Wayne Dyer** exemplified how to be grateful for the abuse I suffered during childhood which at one time made me feel worthless.
- 5 **Carl Jung** encouraged me to detach from identifying with my ego so that I may investigate and understand the inner workings of my mind with a childlike curiosity.
- 6 **Thich Nhat Hanh** inspired me to discover the poetry of my own existence through writing which lead to a life I'm so proud to be living that I would die happily if today were my last day.

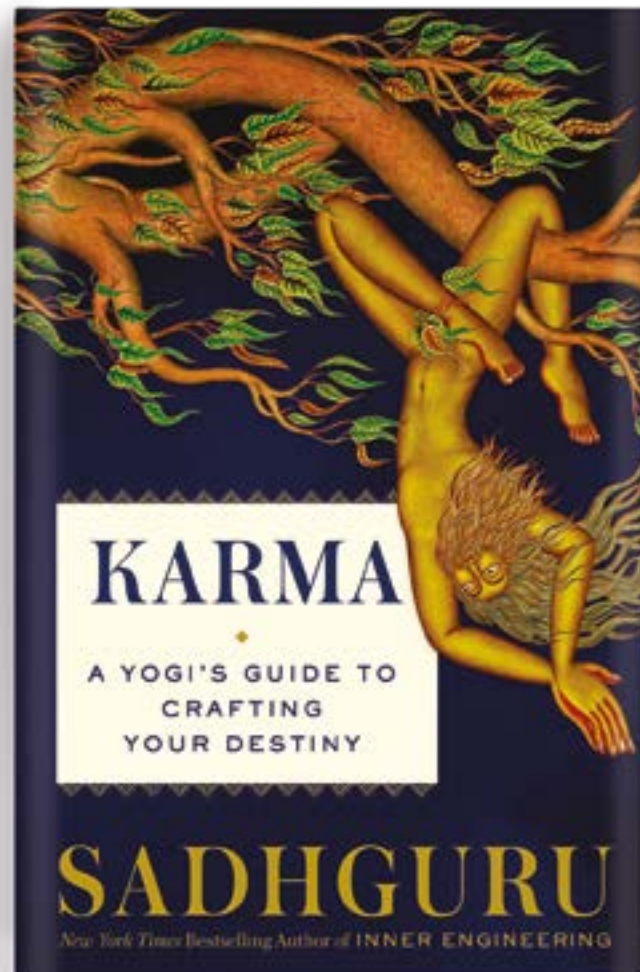
PHOTOS: BEN STANFIELD, AP PHOTO/JAE C. HONG, THIJS STOOP, MATA AMRTANANDAMAYI | FOTOKANNAN, WIM HOF METHOD

Megans's top 5

- 1 **Tony Robbins** inspired me as a teenager, when I was having debilitating anxiety. I found so much inspiration in his life story!
- 2 **My Grandmother** helps me see the glass half full! She has always been a constant source of inspiration and positivity my entire life!
- 3 **Camille Kostek** is my idol as a model! I love how she expresses herself through dance. She is a powerful role model for young girls! I love her energy, lifestyle and career! I aspire to be a role model like her!
- 4 **Maria Menounos** is my favorite journalist, tv host and reporter! I've had the honor of working under her for the past four years! She is so admirable and hard working!
- 5 **Marianne Williamson** is a trailblazer in the spiritual writing space. She is dedicated to her work and I feel that she is genuinely here to serve a higher purpose!



LEARN HOW TO LIVE INTELLIGENTLY
AND JOYFULLY IN A CHALLENGING WORLD



Coming soon from world-renowned spiritual leader
and *New York Times* bestselling author **SADHGURU**

Available April 2021 wherever books are sold. Preorder your copy today.

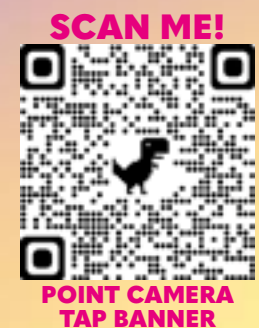
Learn more at isha.us/karmabook



HARMONY
BOOKS

SUBSCRIBE!

meditationmag.com/subscribe



Subscription is \$15/yr. That's less than lunch.

It takes 2 minutes to sign up. Be mindful while you do it and pretend it's a meditation. We'll mail you two issues for 2021. Then 4 per year starting 2022! The more subscribers we have, the more issues we can afford to publish. Support us or die! Just kidding. But seriously give us your money immediately. Sign up using the QR code above to get free shipping for life (worldwide)! meditationmag.com/subscribe

Scan this
QR code
to get the world's
coolest, hottest
mind-blowing-est
**MEDITATION
MAGAZINE**
delivered straight
to your door.
Never go outside
again.

Cingarkaq Devine

Lives: Eagle River, AK

Yoga & Wellness Educator

Founder: Devine Yoga

Knowing my culture gives me roots, while my yoga practice gives me knowledge to explore the depths of my soul.

Mat: Jade

Nature's Best Yoga Mat

Beluga Point, AK

JADE|YOGA™
www.jadeyoga.com