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MEDITATION

THE HEALTH ISSUE

MIND, BODY & SPIRIT

HOLISTIC HEALTH
FOR A HAPPY LIFE

6 SIMPLE
WORDS THAT

STOP ANXIETY IN ITS TRACKS

GET FIT AND FEEL GREAT!

DIANNE
BONDY:
HEALTHY
DOES NOT
EQUAL
SKINNY!

JESSAMYN STANLEY

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DELICIOUS
PLANT-BASED
RECIPES

Printed In The USA Spring 2022 | HEALTH



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CORNERSTONES OF

**HEALTH &
HAPPINESS**

WITH KIMBERLY SNYDER

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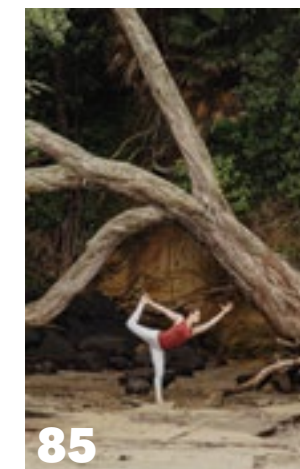
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Kimberly Snyder (left) photo by Kevin Estrada, and Jessamyn Stanley (right) photo by Mona Loring

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Editor's Letter

Editor's Log: November 4th, 2021.

The nerve pain has reached my right pinky toe. It started last week, with a twinge in my back. Then my hands started going numb while I slept. It spread all the way down my right leg, and is currently affecting the right side of my neck & head. The pulsing headache is fading now... probably due to that naproxen I took a couple of hours ago.

I'm a pretty healthy guy. I've been walking 3-5 miles every day for nearly a year. I use resistance bands for strength training, and I regularly bench-press baby Sky. I eat a healthy veg diet. I'm not "ripped" but I'm lean enough. I don't have any major health issues. So why is this nerve pain suddenly spreading through my body and making it hard to walk, work, focus, or get anything done?

I can't say for sure, but mayyybe my body is responding to the stress of growing a global magazine company in a semi-post-apocalyptic world.

The pandemic has lasted longer than any of us anticipated. We thought things would get back to normal in 2021. We were wrong.

Inflation and supply chain disruptions have increased our expenses, while limited

retail traffic has squeezed our margins on the revenue side. The cost of digital marketing has skyrocketed with all the brick-and-mortars moving online. It's taking months for our mags to arrive in Australia due to cargo restrictions there. We've gone from being immediately profitable on every subscription sale, to losing money on the first year of each subscription (don't worry, we are still profitable when we account for renewals).

We currently owe Lane Press (our eco-friendly printer in Vermont) more money than we have in the bank. The gap between what we have and what we owe is widening daily. This situation has put a lot of stress on my shoulders, and on Jovanna's as well. We are doing our best to prevent the stress from reaching Baby Sky, who seems to be maintaining a healthy focus on biting our fingers and trying to eat carpet fibers off the floor.

I know that there are a million ways that I can "fix" our financial situation. We can publish more free meditation articles to attract more subscribers. We can increase the number of ads in each issue. We can sell other products and services (like personalized meditation

coaching) to our subscribers. There are a million possible solutions, but they all take time to execute. And we need to pay the printer... er... yesterday.

I've been stressed out about all this for the past few months. I've been working for weeks at a time without taking a day off... often sacrificing my daily meditations (clearly a mistake).

The anxiety reached its peak last week. I was in a constant, never-ending panic attack. My breathing was shallow for days at a time. I was waking up often, with nausea, in the middle of the night. My nervous system felt like a tangled mess of fraying, sparking electrical wires. The faster I ran, the more my productivity dropped. I went from being a productivity powerhouse to barely getting anything done.

I was starting to think that I needed to stop, to "save myself." I felt the shadows of depression, burnout, and despondency, stalking around the edges of my consciousness, like a tiger poised to pounce and swallow me whole.

But a few days ago, in the depths of despair, ready to give up on the world and move to the forest like Henry David Thoreau, I randomly flipped open my Bhagavad Gita, and read a passage that has given me (at least some measure of) my long-lost calm, clarity, resolve and productivity back:

“One who is unattached to the fruits of his work, and who works as he is obligated, is in the renounced order of life. He is the true mystic; not he who lights no fire and performs no work.”

Bhagavad Gita, Ch 6, Text 1

In the moment that I read that passage, something shifted in my brain.

I realized that I didn't need to move to the forest, light no fire, and perform no work in order to reclaim my zen.

I remembered that it was possible to work hard, fight uphill battles, and experience stressful situations... all while maintaining a peaceful happy stillness inside.

I realized that all of my mental and emotional energy were hinging on the outcomes of the work that I've been doing. Worse, I realized that this emotional attachment has not only been hurting me (and Jovanna by association)... it was hurting our company as well!

Like Arjuna in the Gita, it is our responsibility as humans to fight, to uphold love, light, and righteousness in this world. But we aren't doing anybody any favors by stressing out and breaking down, losing sleep and productivity over the fruits of our labor.

I decided in that moment that no matter what happens, no matter how hard the battle, no matter if we win or lose... I will not sacrifice my happiness, clarity, peace of mind and mental health, by tying my emotions to "desired" outcomes. Doing so has not only hurt me and my loved ones, but has also (ironically) hamstrung my ability to make good decisions, creatively, productively, and financially, for the company.

Along with maintaining my mental fortitude and putting mental health first, I have also committed to increasing my daily breathwork, meditation, and physical exercise practices. This increase in self-care is already helping me clear my head and get my priorities straight.

Of course, a few days of meditation does not financial miracles make. We still don't have enough money to pay the printer, and I am still under a lot of pressure. I am still feeling the effects in my nervous system. But my mind is finally starting to heal. I am confident that over time, I will heal from these mental and emotional maladies. I will take the best decisions and actions that I can in each moment, to strengthen and

grow Meditation Magazine, and bring more love and light into the world.

Welcome To The Health Issue!

With all these spiritual, mental & emotional (and now physical) health issues that I am working through right now, I am deeply thankful that we've decided to center this issue of Meditation Magazine around the topic of holistic health.

The Health Issue is about much more than toned abs, silky hair, and perky round shiny buttocks. It's about techniques, practices, habits and mindsets that we can use to improve the health of our whole, entire beings:

- **Mental Health**
- **Emotional Health**
- **Spiritual Health**
- **And yes, Physical Health as well.**

As the pain in my foot continues to subside (thank The Universe for NSAIDs!), it is clearer than ever to me that all of these forms of health — body, mind, emotions & spirit — are fundamentally, deeply and inexorably connected.

I know that meditation has helped me, and will continue to help me, with my own holistic health journey. It is my deepest wish that it can help you with yours as well.

Editor's Update: February 14th, 2022

Wow! Re-reading (and re-living) the "Editor's Log" above gave me chills. I can be a real drama llama sometimes 🐫

Here's a little update: After reading that line from the Bhagavad Gita, I made a commitment to myself, not to stress about the fruits of my labor, but simply to focus on making the best possible decisions, and taking the best possible actions, in each moment. I thought that this was going to require a lot of mental/emotional effort on my part, but it has actually proven to be far more natural (and effective) than I expected.

Since that moment, my mental, physical, and emotional health have been improving every day. I'm much

more present, relaxed, and happy as I go about my work. I've been catching myself shallow-breathing faster than before. In those moments of noticing, I consciously switch back to deep belly breathing, and it has made a world of difference.

I've been making good progress in our business as well. I was able to implement some solutions that have significantly improved our financial situation. We were able to pay the printer, (almost) on time, for the last issue!

We have another big bill coming up to print this Health Issue (that you're holding in your hands) in just a few days from now. Thankfully, I was able to sell nearly a dozen ads over the past few weeks, and raised some money from small investors. We now have *almost* enough money to get this into print... But hey, I'm not panicking. I'm moving forward, with rapid action on the outside, and peaceful stillness on the inside.

In order to resolve our cash-flow issues on a permanent basis, I've been talking to some larger investors, and things are looking good. I even got in touch with one of the largest, coolest, most powerful meditation platforms on the internet, and we are discussing a potential partnership that would put us in a position to grow powerfully, for decades to come, into the global force for good that we have always intended this magazine to be.

We will be listing the names of investors & partners in the "credits" section, next to the table of contents! Investors & partners also have the chance to work with us, in our business and our magazine, to help make the world a happier place through meditation. If you know someone who might be interested in working with us, please let us know at hello@meditationmag.com!

ON ANOTHER NOTE... I WROTE A BUNCH OF IMPORTANT PIECES FOR THIS ISSUE, THAT I THOUGHT WOULD HELP PEOPLE WITH THEIR HOLISTIC HEALTH... BUT WE GOT SO MANY GREAT SUBMISSIONS THAT I DIDN'T HAVE ROOM TO PUBLISH THEM HERE. IF YOU WANT TO READ MORE OF MY THOUGHTS, TIPS, AND ADVICE FOR IMPROVING YOUR HOLISTIC HEALTH, PLEASE SCAN THIS QR CODE TO ACCESS THEM FOR FREE ONLINE!



WELCOME TO THE HEALTH ISSUE!

When people hear the word “health,” they often think of toned abs, lean physiques, and low BMIs.

Indeed, most health-related magazines tend to reinforce this perception, with fitness models and bodybuilders, all cut from the same mold, smiling out at you from a dozen different covers.

At Meditation Magazine, we think of health a little differently.

Firstly, health doesn’t come in just one shape or size. There are many “healthy” body types, with far more variety than is normally shown on the covers of fitness magazines. We explore this topic with Jessamyn Stanley, Dianne Bondy, and other wonderful luminaries in this space.

Second, and perhaps more importantly: the physical body is just the tip of the iceberg. It’s the part that pokes above the surface – the part that we can see with our eyes – and therefore the most “obvious.” For that reason, physical health often gets more attention than mental, emotional, and spiritual health... even though these spheres are just as important as the physical.

Even in our spiritual community, the word “yoga” has all but lost its original meaning. “Yoga” means “union.” Oneness of mind and body, Oneness of individual and Universe. It doesn’t mean “super stretchy workouts;” the word “yoga” is essentially synonymous with the word “meditation.” The physical asanas that have become so popular in the past few decades were actually created as a way to stretch the body and prepare for long periods of sitting meditation, but they have all but stolen the show in our modern western society.

Physical health is important, but so are **mental**, **emotional**, and **spiritual** health. Therefore, in this issue, we’re going to aim to give adequate attention to all of them, so you can get a deep, holistic view; a comprehensive guide for living your healthiest, happiest, and best life.



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- Lise P., Westbury

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MEDITATIONS

Guided tutorials to improve your health



5

**Meditations To Boost
Your Mental, Emotional,
& Physical Health**

JENELLE KIM PHOTOS: "OWNED BY" ELEVATED PUBLIC RELATIONS LLC

1

A CHI GONG EXERCISE

with
Dr Jenelle Kim

A quick breathing or Chi Gong exercise that you can do anywhere and at any time.

One simple Qi Gong or “moving meditation” exercise that can be done anywhere and at any time is called Separating Heaven and Earth. This exercise can quickly rebalance the body and calm the mind, help to improve digestion and increase circulation, as well as benefit the heart and immediately relieve stress. Physically, it also helps to strengthen and lengthen the muscles of the arms, shoulders, back, and abdomen.

1. To do this exercise, stand with your feet comfortably apart, about the width of your shoulders or slightly wider. Your arms should be relaxed next to your body with your palms towards your legs. This is your basic neutral stance.
2. Next, breathe out from your abdomen as you reach up with one arm (palm facing towards the sky), while lowering the other (palm facing towards the earth). Keep a soft curve in both arms. →





- 3. Breathe in as you bring your arms back to chest level and breathe out as you swap arms, one going high and the other low.
- 4. Finish the movement by inhaling as you bring your palms towards your chest, arms bent as if you are hugging a barrel (picture bringing energy from the universe into your heart and chest).
- 5. Then, breathe out as you turn your palms towards the ground and lower them, as if you are pushing the energy from your hands into the ground.
- 6. Repeat the exercise for 3–5 minutes.

Author profile



Dr. Jenelle Kim
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Dr. Kim is the founder and lead formulator for JBK Wellness Labs. She is devoted to integrating the philosophy, medical wisdom, and expertise of East Asia with the advancements of modern life and medicine of the West in order to touch and positively affect the lives of others.



A WALKING MEDITATION

with Ireoluwakitan Adebayo

Try meditative walking to feel more present and connected with the world around you.

When I was a kid, my grandmother told me that I was her ugliest grandchild.

She said it to be funny and I laughed to be polite. I was a very chubby kid growing up in an era where beauty was associated with being skinny. The more space you took, the less you were considered worthy. When I was in high school, I never ever took part in sports or physical activities. I preferred to fail my physical assessment than to jiggle and wobble in the presence of people slimmer than myself.

I used to think that I hated sports and that I would always suck in physical activities. That mindset changed when, after years of battling anorexia and bulimia, I took up leisure walking to help ease anxiety. I realized that I loved the thrill of discovering new paths and watching Mother Nature excel in quiet strength.

While out on my walks, I found ponds and lakes that reminded me of the beauty of simplicity and the victory of perseverance.

I saw wild flowers that cheered me on and whispered about how the best blossoms can happen in the driest spaces. Birds chirped in excitement and comforted me with their songs of breakthrough.

I walked and walked my way into a clearer mind scape and realized that I actually had remarkable endurance. Whenever I would walk with friends to a lecture, I would find them lagging behind and breathless. I was shocked because in my head, though I was a tiny size 8, I was still that clumsy chubby kid. Walking taught me more about my body than diet culture ever did. With an increase in my self-confidence, I signed up with the local gym and fell in love with exercise even further. →

ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK



Author profile



Ire Adebayo
Legal Researcher
Ire has a fond appreciation of meditation, yoga and Ayurveda and incorporates all three into her daily life. She is a stereotypical bookworm and loves all written word and genres. You can find her reading something new @daughter_books on Instagram.

3

A GROUP MEDITATION AND QI TRANSFERENCE

with
Ron Lambert

Trip out on Qi and oxygen, with Ron's mushroom-filament inspired Qi Transference breathwork technique!

There is a profound difference between meditating in solitude and meditating in a group. The following method is one that I developed and use regularly to synchronize with group partners and exercise energy perception and control. There are two underlying precepts for this exercise that I encourage you to visualize during the process.

First, visualize that you are a four dimensional being. Your body exists in three dimensions and your consciousness grows into a fourth spatial dimension, →



I've stopped weighing myself and obsessing over my body. I eat when I am hungry and try to stop when I'm not. I am determined to keep exercising from my sacred place of self-discovery and self care and not as an activity borne out of guilt or the desire to change my body.

Walking is a magical activity. It is slow and steady enough for you to take full breaths and immerse your senses with the life that surrounds you. And walking should not be limited to parks and spaces of nature. We can find the glorious magic of life on everyday routes; the sights of laughing children walking to school, the sniffing dog with the adorable brown spots trying to break free from his leash and the dancing routine of the traffic lights that lure us with their display of routine and consistency.

Get Started
Walking can be a profound yet subtle means of embarking on internal healing. It is a free and unassuming way to learn how to breathe in the atmosphere around you and shift your focus from whatever is raging within to the unscripted reality of the world around you. Your internal critic will try and convince you that walking is not meant for you, let this be your sign to ignore that voice. Start at your own pace, flow in accordance to your stride, selfishly navigate routes and through consistent steps you will quickly learn to trust your new sense of capacity.
Walking is a beautiful form of both meditation and gentle exercise, it gives your body a loving warm up without the sense of competition and allows you to be fully independent in designing the activity. If

you have ever felt like you have lost control in life or are drowning in the overwhelm of a post-pandemic world, intentional meditative walks can help you feel centered and reintroduce you to the world around you at a pace you are comfortable with.
With meditation there is sometimes a perception that 'you must get it right'. True meditation is centered on you and what feels right for you in each moment. Through meditative walks you can begin to discover the flexibility and even the excitement that a meditative state of mind brings. Your choices are vast as you can decide to focus on your breaths, pay attention to the wildlife, softly acknowledge the swoosh of cars or simply the sensation in your legs as you stride.
All you need to do is open the door and take your first step. ●

spreading out from the physical body like filaments, and connecting you directly to the world in the same way that nerves connect the brain to the body.

The second precept is to visualize a pool of water in your mind with tiny ripples on the surface. Above the water is our true consciousness, below the water is our body. The rippling water separating them is caused by the chattering mind. The goal is to silence the chattering mind and still the water so that our consciousness can make direct contact with the body without the chattering mind acting as a filter.

The technique outlined below is called *Qi Transference*. It combines breath work, visualization and humming. Energy perception often overlaps with emotion. As we feel the energy responding to us, emotion nears the surface. This exercise is quite restorative and relaxing. It's like bathing in pure energy and existence.

To start, take a seated position with your meditation partner sitting across from you. Place both of your index fingers over your lips to self-shush. The thumbs touching the chin and the other fingers curled downward or interlaced loosely.

Inhale slowly and draw air and Qi into your lungs. The air enters through the nose, the Qi enters through

the filaments. They mix in our lungs. After you finish inhaling, hold briefly, and then hum during the exhale. Visualize sending out the air and the Qi you gathered toward your meditation partner. Let the hum resonate freely through you, the vibrations are helpful in quieting the chattering mind.

This process will go back and forth as you and your meditation partner take turns inhaling and gathering Qi, humming and exhaling to direct the Qi into your partner. After a few cycles you get the timing and the hang of it.

This Qi transference exercise is cyclical and can be extended for as long as you like. This technique of gathering and sharing energy with your meditation partner will enhance your perception of Qi as well as provide practice in controlling the energy and sending it into a target.

The chattering mind is a constant hindrance and prevents us from feeling all of our existence. Fortunately, it has trouble doing multiple things at the same time. When this method of breathing is used during one's meditation, the mental chattering of the mind will eventually surrender, and you will unify your full existence. When that happens, the visualized water turns into pure energy.

Sharing this exercise with another intensifies the experience and deepens the bonds of friendship and respect. This method of group meditation is from the modern shamanic practice of seeking archaeo gnosis, the ancient knowledge.

Repeatedly practicing this type of meditation increases mental clarity and establishes a stronger mind-body connection.

Additionally, if you feel a headache coming on, you can sometimes stop the headache from forming by using this method. Oftentimes, a headache is really just a storm of the chattering mind. Creating the stillness of the chattering stops the headache from forming.

Learning to still the chattering mind is a powerful tool that can be used anywhere. All you need is a few minutes to breathe, hum and gather the energy.

If you don't have a group it can also be done as part of your regular individual meditation practice. The humming component and visualizing the energy entering you with each breath will quiet the chattering mind which forms a barrier to truly feeling and connecting with your celestial self.

If you have more than two people, you can form a circle and take turns passing the energy to the person on your right. ●



4

USING PHYSICAL EXERCISE AS MEDITATION

with Kevin Ellerton

What if we could combine meditation with physical exercise, in a single, super-healthy activity? We could take care of our whole health, body and mind, with one simple daily practice. It sounds uber efficient... like feeding two birds with one scone. Could staying healthy really be this simple?

Thousands of years ago, in India and China, meditators realized that physical exercise can be combined with meditation, for highly efficient mind-body workouts. These ancient innovators created many forms of meditative movement, like tai chi, qi gong, yoga asanas, that were custom-tailored to be meditations-in-motion. Not only are movement-based meditations time-efficient, but they also help strengthen the connection between body and mind.

While the famous movement-based meditations (yoga asanas, tai chi, qi gong, etc) are a great way to combine meditation with exercise, they are not the only ways. In fact, you can make any form of →



Author profile



Ron Lambert

Creator and host of "my mushroom shaman" podcast. Having dealt with depression and anxiety for decades it was through the medicinal use of psilocybin mushrooms and regular meditation that he was able to address the root causes of his depression. He is currently writing a novel on the healing power of mushrooms. Additional information is available and links can be found on mymushroomshaman.com



exercise into meditation, simply by focusing your full attention on the experience of your body in motion.

Personally, I love to swim. I have to admit: my mind is often caught up in my to-do-list (even while swimming!). But I do my best to take at least a few minutes of my swimming time to be fully present in the experience, as I move through the water.

I let my attention settle into the sinews, my biceps, triceps, and shoulders contracting and relaxing as my arms pull through the water. I feel the miniscule muscle movements in my glutes, hamstrings and calves as they kick. I feel the cold water on my skin, the invigoration of my nervous system, the feeling of my body slowly running out of oxygen as I peer up at the rippling surface from the bottom of the pool.

You can do the same with any exercise.

Many people love running as a form of meditation. The repetitive sensations of the feet hitting the ground, the sound of the footsteps, the wind in the hair.

Dancing is another beautiful form of meditative

movement. Have you ever lost yourself in the experience of dancing, fully immersed in the experience of the present moment? This is a form of meditation. From Polynesian and Pacific Islanders, to the ancient Persian whirling dervishes, to Balinese ecstatic dances and Osho's Dynamic Meditations, many cultures use dance as meditation.

Music can add another dimension to the meditation-in-motion exercise. The combination of music and movement can stir up emotions and lead to euphoric epiphanies that stationary meditation is simply not designed to generate.

So, if exercise-as-meditation can generate such powerful meditative states, and even improve our bodily health at the same time, why not just replace seated meditation with meditative movement? Wouldn't that be so much more efficient?

I've wondered about this idea several times over the course of my life. I even spent long stretches of time neglecting my sitting meditation practice, focusing solely on meditation-in-movement. Over the years, I

have come to realize that while meditative movement is an important part of a happy, healthy lifestyle, seated practice is essential as well. Seated meditation brings its own suite of (very important) benefits, which meditative movement simply cannot replace.

Five reasons to maintain your seated practice as well

While movement-based meditations have some amazing and powerful effects, there are some very important reasons to keep a consistent seated practice as well.

1. Becoming Aware Of Deep Unconscious Thoughts And Emotions

One of the big benefits of stillness-based meditation is that it allows your mind to settle down, so that your deep thoughts and emotions – your deepest desires, dearest dreams, and darkest desperations – can bubble up from the murky waters of your unconscious mind, even if just for a moment, to be clearly seen in the light of day.

This type of clarity generally comes from settling down, rather than stirring up, the mind and the emotions. It comes in stillness, not in motion. While meditation-in-movement has its benefits, meditation-in-stillness is far more conducive to becoming aware of unconscious thoughts and emotions.

2. Developing Equanimity

Exercise changes your state of mind, and tends to make you feel happier and more excited. While this may seem like a good thing, it also misses one of the major benefits of meditation.

Meditation is not just about “being happy” in the moment; it is also about accepting the darkness, anxiety, depression, boredom, unhappiness, and “baseline” states of mind.

If you only use physical exercise as your go-to form of meditation, your meditations all involve changing your state from “baseline” to “happier,” and you miss out on the opportunity to recognize, accept, and come to terms with the lower-energy and darker states of mind that often arise as a part of your daily life.

3. Cultivating States Of Deep Calm

While exercise cultivates states of excited energy, seated meditation cultivates states of deep calm, which are difficult to access through any other method.

4. Cultivating States Of Focus, Concentration & Samadhi

One of the major benefits of meditation, that helps people become more successful in life, is that it can

help you develop your capacity to focus, concentrate, and modulate your attention.

While movement meditation does require the active management of attention (continuously bringing the mind back to experiencing the sensations of the body in motion) – and therefore it does train the mind to focus & concentrate to some extent – meditation in stillness has some distinct advantages in this regard.

Seated meditation forces your mind to contend with a sense of boredom... the desire for more stimulation. In stillness, the mind jumps around, trying to find something interesting to focus on. By practicing meditation in stillness, we begin to recognize this tendency of the mind, and in recognizing it, we begin to learn how to wrangle “the monkey mind,” or “tame the wild ox.”

As we go deeper into states of concentration, we find some powerful meditative states that are difficult to access through meditation-in-motion. Samadhi, the ancient word for deep, sustained meditative concentration, is much more effectively accessed through meditation-in-stillness than through meditation-in-motion.

5. Realizing Infinity/Nothingness, And The Oneness Of Existence

While meditation-in-motion can indeed give you a feeling of Oneness with the Universe, the movement of the body tends to keep the mind rooted in the body.

In stillness, when we go deep inside, the mind can let go of its attachment to the senses, sinking deeper and deeper into the fabric of Existence Itself.

While movement-meditations tend to keep our brains in alpha-brainwave frequencies, deep stillness-based meditations can allow us to access deeper theta-brainwave states.

It is in these states that the deepest and most powerful “spiritual awakening” experiences tend to arise... those mind-blowing moments of realization, gazing in awe into infinity and nothingness, and deeply realizing your Oneness with Existence.

Combining stillness-based and movement-based meditations for a well-rounded practice

So, while meditation-in-motion exercises can be super efficient, and even offer benefits that are not accessible through stillness-based meditations, they should be used as supplements rather than as replacements for seated meditation.

When combined with a seated meditation practice, movement-based meditations can deepen your →

mind-body-connection and form an essential part of a well-rounded holistic health routine, keeping your mind and body healthy for decades to come.

Here is a combination stillness/ movement meditation for you to try:

- 1. Get dressed/prepared for whatever form of exercise you would like to experience today.** For example, if you're going swimming, put on your bathing suit and go to the poolside. If you're hiking, put on your hiking clothes (maybe leave the boots off for now). If you're dancing, put on flowy clothes and get your music prepared.
- 2. Take some time to meditate in stillness.** It can be anything from five minutes to five hours... depending on you, the time you have available, your experience and commitment level with meditation. Try a simple breathing meditation: just notice the sensations in your body as the air flows in and out, in and out. Observe what your body feels like as it is inhaling, and as it is exhaling, inhaling, and exhaling. When your mind wanders away from being aware of the breath (as minds tend to do), just keep bringing it back to the breathing, with a smile. Close your eyes, and just observe your body breathing for a while.
- 3. Bring the meditative awareness with you, as you move into your physical exercise.** When you open your eyes from your stillness-based-meditation, allow your mind to remain rooted, concentrated, absorbed in the body and breathing.
- 4. Be fully present with all of the sensations, as you transition into the physical activity.** Notice how you feel as you move into the activity. Maybe there's a sense of anxiety or hesitation before jumping into the cold water. Maybe there's some technical frustration getting the music to play. Maybe it all flows smoothly. Just be present with all of it, as you transition from stillness to movement.
- 5. Feel all the sensations as you move through your physical exercise.** Keep the mind concentrated in the body. Feel every movement, every sensation, fully here & now in the present moment. Do not judge the sensations as good or bad (note: if you actually injure yourself, you should be aware of it and take care of it). The cold water, the aching legs, the wind in your hair – just feel them, as part of the experience of being alive in this moment... and enjoy the experience of meditation in motion!



Author profile



Kevin Ellerton
Kevin is the founder of Meditation Magazine, Heart Centered Ventures, and The Meditation Organization. His mission in life is to make the world a happier place through meditation.

5

A MEDITATION FOR ANXIETY ATTACKS
with Kevin Ellerton

The 6 simple words that short-circuit anxiety attacks

People often assume that, because of my decades-long meditation practice, I no longer experience anxiety (or any other mental health issues). But I'll tell you a little secret: I had a major anxiety attack today.

I woke up in the middle of the night worrying that we are going to miss our print dates for this issue of Meditation Magazine. We have 40 days until we go to press. The content's not finished, the layout's not

done, and unless I pull off a miracle, we will not have enough money to print and ship the new issue on the date that we are supposed to. Missing our print date would instantly anger huge swaths of our subscribers, filling my inbox with hate mail, cancelation & refund requests, and more. This is not just some random irrational thought... It is literally my responsibility to move things forward, and we are quickly running out of time. →



But about an hour ago, as I was sitting on the floor trying to take care of my baby, I remembered the single most important key to short-circuiting an anxiety attack!

It was just six words that went through my mind... but those six words instantly put me on a hot-air balloon, gently rising above the anxiety, instead of falling deeper into it:

IT'S OK TO FEEL THIS WAY.

When you're in the midst of an anxiety attack, these are not the words that are naturally passing through your brain.

The nature of anxiety is to feel that "This is bad. This is not OK." When you start feeling those things about the anxiety itself, it becomes a downward spiral – having anxiety about having anxiety about having anxiety. The worse the anxiety gets, the more anxious you feel about it... and on and on it goes. This echo chamber / feedback loop is what keeps anxiety attacks going strong.

The way to short-circuit this vicious cycle is simple: stop generating anxiety in response to anxiety. Accept it. It's OK. It's part of being alive.

Instead of getting anxious about the feelings of tightness in your chest, the queasiness in your stomach, the dryness in your mouth, the rising bile in your throat... just feel them. Without judgment. Don't worry about them... instead, realize that these feelings are a natural part of life, that come and go. Right now, they are here, and later, they will be gone.

It's OK. Let it be. Don't try to run away from the anxiety... feel into it. Feel your body, as it is, in this state, with all these feelings. Feel the air flowing in and out of your body. Maybe the inhalations and exhalations are shallower than usual. Maybe you're getting less oxygen than usual. It's OK. Just feel it, with openness, acceptance, and even curiosity. "Huh! This is what anxiety feels like." It's a natural part of being alive.

As you continue to observe the anxiety with equanimity (non-judgmental awareness), you will begin to rise above it.

You'll still feel the anxious feelings in your body and mind for a while. This is normal. Your system is full of anxious brain chemicals right now, and they will take time to dissipate. But over time, as you keep

observing your feelings with equanimity, you will rise out of the downward spiral.

Meditation isn't meant to get rid of anxiety, but to change your relationship to it.

Many people think that meditation is a way to get rid of anxiety. But if you think of it that way, it will only make your anxiety worse.

The idea that you should "get rid of anxiety" inherently implies that anxiety is bad, and that you should not be feeling it. This is the type of thinking that fuels the downward spiral.

So I'll let you in on another little secret: Meditation does not make anxiety (or any other kind of suffering) disappear forever.

The Buddha found it so fundamentally important to make sure you understand this, that he dedicated the first two of his "Three Marks of Existence" to the following Truths:

There is suffering. Suffering comes in various forms (anxiety, depression, grief, etc) but it is part of life and it is inevitable.

Nothing is permanent. Everything is constantly changing. The Universe is an ever swirling soup of energy and matter. You may be experiencing anxiety now... but it will pass. At some moment in the past, you experienced relaxation. At some moment in the future, you will experience joy. You will continue to cycle through all the feels, for the rest of your life. This is the experience of being human.

This may sound bleak or depressing... and it can be, if you take it that way. "Oh no, everything is going to be terrible forever!" But if, instead, you observe these simple facts unemotionally, like a physicist studying the nature of Reality... then the Truth will set you free.

Accepting Reality – the fact that "Hey, sometimes life is not fun... that's just the nature of being alive" – is the first step to transcending, or rising above, an anxiety attack.

If you want to spiral deeper into anxiety, try to resist it. Tell yourself "This is bad. I shouldn't have anxiety right now." This will make you feel like something is deeply wrong, and will give you anxiety about having anxiety. This is how the downward spiral starts. Having anxiety about having anxiety about having anxiety. DON'T DO THAT.

If you want to STOP the downward spiral, and get on a hot air balloon rising out of the anxiety, tell yourself this instead:

IT'S OK TO FEEL THIS WAY.

To practice this realization as a meditation:
 Sit in a quiet, comfortable place with your eyes closed.
 Repeat in your mind or out loud: "It's OK to feel this way."
 Feel the sensations in your body. Just observe them with curiosity, without judging them as positive or negative.
 Keep observing, as sensations arise, evolve, and disappear.
 Be aware of the breathing flowing in and out. Don't try to control it – just watch it flow. In and out. In and out.
 When your mind gets distracted by thoughts, bring it back to the sensations in your body. Always remember: "It's OK to feel this way." ●

Read this after the anxiety has subsided



While realizing that "It's OK to feel this way" can be a life-saving way to short-circuit anxiety attacks in the present moment, there are also many things that you can do to reduce your anxiety levels over time. For our 23 Healthy Ways To Reduce Anxiety In The Long Term, please visit meditationmag.com/health/reduce-anxiety or scan this QR code with your phone camera.



Featured Asana

VRIKSHASANA AND ARDHA BADDHA PADMOTTANASANA

Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana (ABP - Half bound lotus forward fold), is one of the standing balances in the Ashtanga Primary Series. It's similar to Vrksasana (Tree Pose) because you're standing on one leg so in a way they're variations of the same posture. Tree is a good place to start and to practise and over time if and when the body is ready you can move to practising the half lotus variation. Neither posture is better than the other - the one that's right for you is the best one.

With Featured Yogi: Nadia Gilani

Author profile



Nadia Gilani
Writer and yoga teacher.
She first discovered the practice after her mum took her to a class in the 1990s. She's been practicing ever since. Her first book, The Yoga Manifesto is published by Pan Macmillan on 26th May, 2020. If you want to learn more from Nadia check out: nadiagilani.co.uk or follow her on Instagram: [@the yogadissident](https://www.instagram.com/the yogadissident)



Benefits of posture

All balancing postures are great for concentration, whether you're balancing on your hands or standing on one leg it doesn't matter, we have to use the power and focus of our mind to help us do them. I sometimes think it's fun to close the eyes when doing a standing balance like one of these postures because it really reveals how much the eyes and keeping the gaze still and fixed in one place affects our balance.

How to practice

1. For Tree pose you can do this while linking the breath with your movements or just do the posture and hold it for several breaths as you prefer.
2. If you want to do the pose by synching the breath: inhale and lift the right leg, exhale and place the foot anywhere on the inside of the standing leg, it can be the ankle, on the lower leg or inner thigh but never on the knee. Inhale and bring the palms together in the centre of the chest. Hold and breath for say five to 10 breaths.
3. To exit the posture: inhale and draw the knee into the centre, exhale and lower the leg down and release the hands.
4. Then you can do the other side when you're ready.
5. For a variation once you're in the pose you can explore taking your hands above the head, it can get wobbly so take your time. You can also separate the palms above the head and take gyan mudra (pressing index fingers and thumbs of each hand and pointing the remaining three fingers away).
6. For ABP if you want to sync movement and breath: Inhale, lift the right leg, exhale, place the foot in the lotus, support the foot with the left hand.
7. Inhale reach the right arm to the side and exhale reach around the back of the body and hold onto your left arm or take the right big toe. This is called taking the bind, when the arm wraps around the back of the body. You can then place the left palm in the centre of the chest and stay there.
8. OR keep going... Inhale, lift the chest and exhale, fold forward until the right hand touches the floor.
9. To exit the standing version: inhale knee to the centre and exhale bring the foot down.
10. To exit the folding forward version: inhale and come up, exhale the knee into the centre and release the pose.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEN ARMSTRONG / @ZENARMSTRONG



TIPS & TRICKS

Keep the gaze in one place if you're standing upright. If the eyes are moving the mind tends to follow and then we can lose the balance.

If you're doing the folding forward version move slowly on the exhale down so that you can move your gaze slowly as you go too.

You can use a wall if you feel wobbly so it's there to lean away from back onto your standing leg.

Lotus is challenging so work out what's the best version for your body and explore your practise from there.



CAUTIONS

It's important to draw the knee into the centre before putting the foot on the floor when releasing the pose to protect the knee.

It's best to hold the ankle and not the foot when placing the lotus. Pulling the foot means that the ankle can get twisted which can put pressure on the ankle or knee joint.

It can help the bind if you bring your arm to shoulder height, point the thumb down (to internally rotate the shoulder) then take the arm in a big circle around the back.

Bending the knee of the standing leg can also help reach for the big toe if you're close to binding but not quite there.

Please don't pull the lotus foot up to take the bind as it can put pressure on the ankle and knee joint.



Could Your Anxiety Be Coming from Pandemic PTSD?

Take This 5 Question Quiz, And Learn How to Release It! →

Words by Brett Cotter

PTSD is more common than you think. When most people think of PTSD, they think of soldiers returning from war. But PTSD affects us all to varying degrees. Traumatic events (in many forms) have a tendency to plant seeds of lingering stress and anxiety in our bodies and minds.

With every twist and turn of this global pandemic, anxiety grows, and with it, fear-of-the unknown. It saturates the collective subconscious, affecting us all.

PTSD-related anxiety often snowballs. It starts with a traumatic event, which forms a distressing belief. This in turn leads to a myriad of negative thoughts and behaviors, which create situations that reaffirm the belief. And so PTSD-related anxiety perpetuates itself.

Stress and anxiety differ, as stress has an external trigger, while anxiety continues to arise from the inside. Both can be reduced by following the symptoms to the source.

QUIZ: ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM PANDEMIC PTSD?

Pandemic PTSD is much more widespread than most people realize. Take a moment to look back on the last two years. Recall the most stressful experience you had during the pandemic. You can assess whether your anxiety may be stemming from PTSD from this event, by answering yes or no to these five questions.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. While thinking of the most stressful moment, do you feel any emotion or tension? | Y/N |
| 2. Is the primary emotion related to anger, sadness, fear or overwhelm? | Y/N |
| 3. Close your eyes and move time forward from that memory to the present moment. Does the same emotion show up in subsequent stressful experiences? | Y/N |
| 4. Since the pandemic started have you experienced any adverse changes in your diet, sleep, alcohol/drug consumption or stress level? | Y/N |
| 5. Looking back on the pandemic, do you feel traumatized in any way by anything that happened? | Y/N |

If you answered Yes to at least three questions, your anxiety may be stemming from pandemic PTSD. If the memory of a stressful event activates emotion or tension, it will continue to fuel overreactions. The emotion imprinted on the traumatic memory is at the root of PTSD. When the thought of the memory no longer activates tension, it will no longer fuel overreactions. You can break free by re-patterning the memory from stress to rest using the Stress Is Gone - Traumatic Memory Release (TMR).

ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK, ROSSINA MÉNDEZ

TRAUMATIC MEMORY RELEASE

© Stress Is Gone 2022

The TMR Technique is an empowering way to self-heal the emotions, beliefs and behaviors that stem from traumatic experiences. We can't change a past event in history but we can change the emotional imprint on a memory. This naturally reduces anxiety as we address stress at the source.



- 1 RELAX**
Lie down on your back, place your right hand on your chest and your left hand on your stomach, breathe deep and slow, and once per breath silently say, "I'm okay." Continue for 3-minutes or until you feel relaxed.



- 2 REMEMBER**
With your eyes closed, think of the most stressful moment of the traumatic memory from the quiz. Move your hands to wherever you feel tension. Keep the memory in mind, breathe deep and slow, and once per breath silently say, "I'm okay." Continue for three minutes, or until the tension starts to release.



- 3 RELEASE**
With your eyes closed, see yourself inside the most stressful moment of the memory. Now imagine yourself saying, "I'm okay", inside the memory, while breathing deep and slow. Repeat for three minutes, or until you feel all the tension release. Then shift your awareness from the most stressful moment to the present moment, continuously saying, "I'm okay" once per breath. Continue until you feel completely at peace.



Brett Cotter, Stress Is Gone Founder and Author of "3 Keys to Managing PTSD", is a trauma relief expert and meditation teacher with 20 years of experience. He teaches classes in corporations, schools, hospitals, military bases and disaster sites. He leads retreats at the Omega Institute and the New York Open Center.

"With anxiety on the rise, now it's more important than ever to master the tools of self-care and nurture self-love."



GET BRETT'S FREE MINI-COURSE "3 KEYS TO BREAK FREE FROM ANXIETY" AT BRETTCOTTER.COM

SOUL FOOD

Nourishment for the body, mind, and spirit

KIMBERLY'S KITCHEN

Kimberly Snyder is a holistic health expert & spiritual teacher. Before she released her new book: *You Are More Than You Think You Are*, Kimberly rose to fame as a celebrity nutritionist, promoting healthy eating on national TV shows like Dr. Oz and Good Morning America. These are three of her favorite springtime recipes.

Portrait by Bianca Busketta
Recipe Photography by Katelyn Hughes



Cucumber Carrot Bowls

Serves 4

Ingredients

Dressing

- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 3 Tbs. lime juice
- 2 Tbs. liquid aminos
- 1 ½ Tbs. coconut sugar
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 Tbs. freshly grated lemongrass
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced

Tofu

- 14 oz organic, firm tofu, sliced into 2 inch cubes (sub tempeh)
- 1 Tbs. coconut oil
- 1 Tbs. liquid aminos
- ½ Tbs. sesame oil

Salad

- 1 large English cucumber, spiralized and patted dry
- 2 small carrots, spiralized
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup basil leaves, chopped
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- 1 lime, quartered

Method

Begin by preparing your salad dressing ingredients. In a bowl, whisk together rice vinegar, lime juice, liquid aminos, coconut sugar, red pepper flakes, lemongrass and scallions until sugar is dissolved.

In a large skillet, heat coconut oil on medium for a minute. Place in tofu squares and sauté until golden on both sides. While the tofu is cooking, pour in the liquid aminos and sesame oil. Once tofu is golden on both sides (about 5-7 minutes) set it aside.

Add your cucumber, carrot, bell pepper, cilantro, and basil into a large salad bowl. Toss in your salad dressing.

Sprinkle in your almonds and place your tofu on top of your salad. Squeeze ¼ fresh lime per salad and enjoy!



Kohlrabi Jicama Slaw

Serves 2

Ingredients

- ½ purple kohlrabi, thinly sliced
- ½ small green cabbage, thinly sliced
- ½ jicama, shredded
- 1 carrot, shredded

Dressing

- 2 ½ Tbs. apple cider vinegar
- 1 ½ Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ Tbs. coconut nectar
- ½ Tbs. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. celery seeds

Method

In a medium serving bowl, combine all the slaw ingredients. Set aside.

To make the dressing, in a small bowl, whisk all ingredients until thoroughly blended. Pour the dressing over the slaw and serve immediately.



Refreshing Mango Cauliflower Rice

Serves 4

Ingredients

- ½ head cauliflower
- 1 Tbs. coconut oil
- ¼ cup spring onions, thinly sliced
- 1 large mango, peeled and chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup chopped microgreens
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- Sea salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Method

Wash and let the cauliflower dry completely (this is very important!). Chop into florets, removing the stalk. Place half into the food processor and pulse until the cauliflower has the texture of couscous, being very careful not to over-process. Repeat with the rest of the cauliflower.

Heat the coconut oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat, add the spring onions and sauté for about 3 to 4 minutes, or until soft.

Raise the heat to medium-high. Add the cauliflower “couscous” to the sauté pan. Cover and cook approximately 5 to 6 minutes, stirring frequently, until the cauliflower is slightly crispy on the outside but tender on the inside.

Add to a mixing bowl, and mix in the mango, bell pepper, cilantro, microgreens and lime juice. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste.



HOT FOR FOOD



Lauren Toyota is a bestselling author of two cookbooks, *Vegan Comfort Classics: 101 Recipes To Feed Your Face (Ten Speed Press/Penguin Random House)* and *Hot for Food All Day: Easy Recipes To Level Up Your Vegan Meals*, both available now wherever books are sold!

Recipe photography by Lauren Kretzschmar



Green fresh rolls with green curry dipping sauce

Ingredients

- 5 large green leaf lettuce leaves (ribs removed), torn in half
- 2 avocados, sliced
- 1/2 English cucumber, ribboned with a peeler
- 1 1/2 cups sugar snap peas
- 1 1/2 cups packed microgreens or sprouts
- 1 1/2 cups fresh mint leaves
- 1 1/2 cups fresh basil leaves
- 1 1/2 cups fresh cilantro leaves

Green curry dipping sauce

- 1/2 cup canned coconut cream
- 1/4 cup tightly packed fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons green curry paste
- 2 large garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon seasoned rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- Pinch chili flakes (optional)

Fresh rolls

- 10 dried rice paper sheets

Method

To make the green curry sauce, in a high-powered blender, add the coconut cream, cilantro, green curry paste, garlic, lime juice, vinegar, sugar, sea salt, and chili flakes. Blend until very smooth. Transfer to a small saucepan and bring to a low simmer, cooking about 2 to 4 minutes, until slightly thicker and reduced.

Once all your vegetables are prepped for the fresh rolls, fill a wide shallow dish that's slightly larger than the rice paper sheets with tepid water so you can soak the whole sheet. Soak one rice paper sheet

at a time, for 10 to 20 seconds. You still want to feel the cross hatch pattern on the surface of the rice sheets. Don't oversoak or it will be too soft and hard to roll.

Assemble the rolls one at a time. Lay the wet rice paper sheets on a work surface. Add a piece of the lettuce and divide the avocado, cucumber, snap peas, microgreens or sprouts, and fresh herbs among the sheets in whatever order you like. Roll one side of the rice paper over the filling, tucking it in as you start rolling again and also folding the sides in.

Continue rolling until completely sealed. Place on a plate or cut in half if you prefer.

Serve with the green curry dipping sauce. Leftover dipping sauce will get thick from refrigeration. Add a teaspoon of water at a time to thin it out until it's a smooth, dippable consistency.

Roasted vegetable Potstickers



Ingredients

- 5 shiitake mushrooms
- 2 cups leftover roasted vegetables
- 1/3 cup finely chopped or shredded napa cabbage
- 1/4 cup finely chopped chives or green onion, plus more for garnish
- 2 teaspoons peeled and grated fresh ginger
- 2 tablespoons gluten-free tamari or low-sodium sauce
- 26 round vegan wonton wrappers
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds
- Neutral vegetable oil, for pan-frying

Sesame Soy Vinaigrette
(for serving)

- 1/2 cup gluten-free tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup toasted sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup or agave nectar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon chili flakes (optional)

Method

To make the sesame soy vinaigrette, combine all of the ingredients in a high-powered blender and blend until very smooth. Set aside.

In a small food processor, pulse the shiitakes into a fine mince. Add the roasted vegetables and pulse until the mixture is about the same size mince as the shiitakes. Do not puree! Transfer to a mixing bowl and combine with the napa cabbage, chives, ginger, and tamari or soy sauce.

To prepare the potstickers, have a small bowl of water, your filling, and a tablespoon nearby, as well as wonton wrappers and a large parchment-lined baking sheet.

Place 3 wrappers onto the baking sheet. Scoop 1 tablespoon of the filling into the center of each wrapper. Dab water around the edge of the wrapper with your finger. Fold one side of the wrapper over the filling to create a half moon shape, then grab the edges and bring them to the top, while creating a flat bottom on the dumpling by gently pressing down on the filling. Pinch-pleat the edges at the top down to the bottom corners to seal. Slightly turn the corners inward. Repeat with the remaining filling and wrappers. At this point, you can freeze the sheet,

and once the potstickers are frozen, transfer them to a freezer-safe container or bag. If you have leftover wrappers, you can freeze them also. Thaw in the fridge before using again.

When ready to cook the potstickers, place the sesame seeds on a small plate. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook 6 to 8 potstickers at a time in the boiling water, until they start to float to the top, about 2 minutes. If boiling from frozen, boil for 3 to 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer the dumplings to a baking sheet or large plate.

Meanwhile, heat a large nonstick pan over medium heat with 1 teaspoon of the oil. Using a pair of tongs to hold the potsticker, place the flat bottom side into the plate of sesame seeds, generously coating it. Place the sesame seed side down into the hot pan and fry for about 4 minutes. You can turn the potstickers onto one side and fry for another 30 seconds to 1 minute if you feel the seam needs to be cooked and steamed a little. Fry in batches of 5 or 6 depending on how large your pan is, adding 1 teaspoon oil per batch.

Serve immediately, with sesame soy vinaigrette on the side for dipping.

Roasted vegetables

Ingredients

- 3 cups (about 18) halved brussels sprouts, outer layer and stem trimmed
- 3 cups medium cauliflower florets, trimmed (about half a head)
- 3 cups cubed Japanese sweet potato (about 1 large potato)
- 1 cup large diced red onion (about half an onion)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

Method

Preheat the oven to 450°F. To a large baking sheet, add the brussels sprouts, cauliflower, sweet potato, and red onion.

Use your hands to coat the vegetables with the olive oil, sea salt, black pepper, chili powder, and thyme. Spread the vegetables out in an even layer.

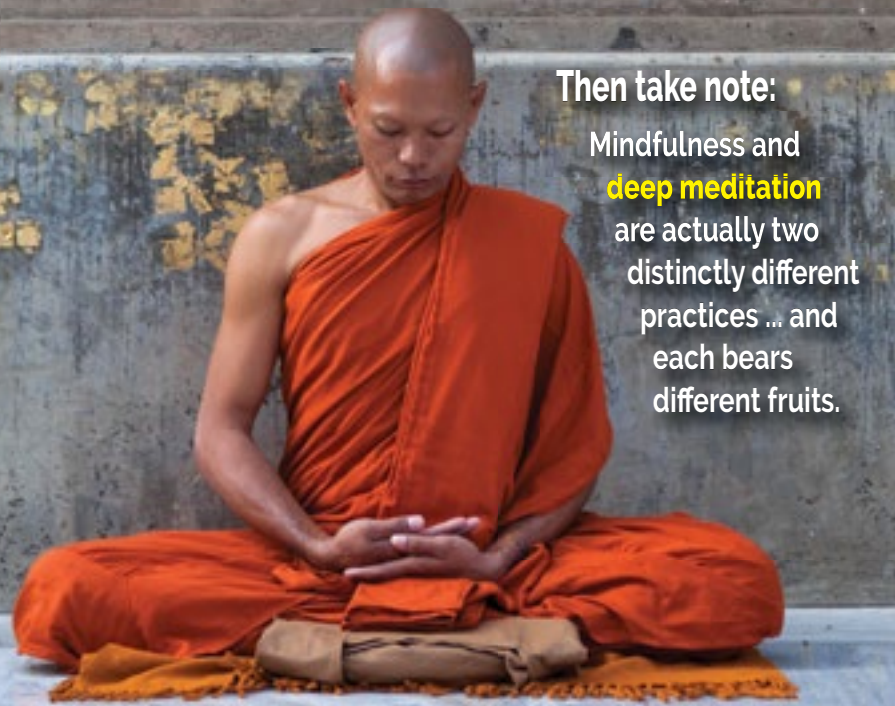
Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, flipping halfway through baking, until the vegetables are tender and golden brown.

TO BUY LAUREN TOYOTA'S BOOK, HOT FOR FOOD ALL DAY, SIMPLY POINT YOUR PHONE CAMERA TO SCAN THE QR CODE!



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Do you seek an everyday state of deep inner peace?



Then take note:

Mindfulness and **deep meditation** are actually two distinctly different practices ... and each bears different fruits.

Why Mindfulness is not Deep Meditation

A “Sword of Truth” Lesson by Sukaishi David

MINDFULNESS ... as seen today ... comes from Buddhist traditions.

But what did Buddha have to say about mindfulness?

Buddha taught his Noble Eightfold Path, which included:

- **Right mindfulness** [*samma sati*]
- **Right meditation** [*samma samadhi*]

Some schools today translate **samadhi** as “concentration”—a monumental error that has delayed the fruits of meditation for millions of people around the world.

Samadhi is actually *de-concentration*—an effortless “let go.” Since thousands of years before Buddha’s time, yoga masters defined **samadhi** as **ultra-deep meditation**—a state of blissful, rejuvenating rest.

And look... we see from Buddha’s own Teaching that **meditation** [*samadhi*] and **mindfulness** [*sati*] are listed *separately*.

Why? Because *they are different!*

Let’s say that again:

Meditation and **mindfulness** are ... *different!* And each bears different fruits.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a focus on what is happening right in front of you—in your mind, your body, or your surroundings.

For example: As you read this page, are you pleasantly focused on what you’re reading? Or do you feel distracted by an inner static... of worries, anxieties, tensions, pressures, rushing, frenzy—a whirlwind of “monkey-mind”?



Simply put, mindfulness means being more aware of whatever is happening all around you “in the now.”

Mindfulness requires certain *efforts* to maintain an outward flow of awareness towards some object—like your breath, your body, or your thoughts.

What is Deep Meditation?

In stark contrast to the *outward* flow of mindful attention, classic techniques of **deep meditation** are an effortless *inner* flow—a *refreshing break* from the present moment happening all around you ...

Deep meditation happens when your awareness reverses direction from its usual *outward* path and begins to float effortlessly *inwards*—which leads to supremely blissful states of **samadhi** ... or as Buddha would say, **right meditation**—profound moments of calm serenity, renewed energies, and deep, restful alertness.

This effortless *inward* flow of awareness doesn’t happen merely by “watching your breath”... because mindful practices focus you *outwardly* towards an object of your attention—in this case, your breath.

On the **OJAYA Deep Meditation** course (ojaya.com), you’ll discover there is a marked difference between *watching the breath* ... and the deep inner empowerment of **samadhi**. Because ... again ...

Samadhi happens only...

... when your awareness flows deeply *inwards*—away from and beyond all words, thoughts, bodily sensations, perceptions and **mindful observations** of what is going on in the “present moment” all around you.

Moreover, as your meditation deepens, you reach a state of pure **samadhi** when the thought waves in your mind gradually settle down to ZERO—a blissful state of total peace and rejuvenating repose.

These moments of pure **samadhi** provide you with a dynamic, revitalizing rest that is *far deeper than sleep*—and entirely different from any efforts to be more mindful.

Mindful practices certainly have their own values, yet by their very nature they hold your mind on the **surface levels** of your awareness—as you engage yourself in various words, visualizations and mindful activities—thus, you remain far away from the serene, blissful depths of **samadhi**.

Samadhi, on the other hand, is the state of *least activity*—where you leave all your efforts and mindful processes far behind ... You arrive deep within your Being to a sublime state of balance and renewal.

Samadhi attacks the very roots of anxiety.

The deep relaxation of **samadhi** penetrates, attacks, and **dissolves** the deepest roots of stress [*sanskaras*] which collect in the nervous system and afflict the consciousness.

This depth of **samadhi** eradicates the inner static ... of worries, anxieties, pressures, rushing, tensions, low energy, and “monkey-mind”—the emotional frenzy and whirlwind of distracting thoughts.

The long-lost key to effortless presence:

The **samadhi** of classic meditation is truly the misplaced, misunderstood, and long-forgotten missing key to serene, everyday presence.

Yet the authentic techniques of **samadhi** have nothing to do with trying to be more mindful of what’s happening in the “present moment” all around you.

Instead, **samadhi** has *everything* to do with *leaving all else behind* and *diving deep within*, so all the frenzied waves of your mind can settle down quietly to a profound state of presence and blissful repose.

Mindful grace & gratitude

As you emerge from a deep meditative state of **samadhi**, you find you are NATURALLY and EFFORTLESSLY mindful. Why?

Because the inner turmoil and static are gone. Now your mind is clear and focused. You feel infused with a heartfelt sense of grace and gratitude.

Compassion becomes your very nature.

Samadhi: The essential secret to inner awakening

Buddha lists the deep meditation of **samadhi** as the eighth, the last in his Noble Eightfold Path—the crest jewel of his entire Teaching ... and the essential

Mindful practices

hold you on the **surface** of your awareness as you focus on the breath, observations, bodily sensations, words, etc.

With the ancient “Armor” technique of



Deep Meditation

... you leave all mindful activities far behind ... as you float gently *inwards* for 10-20 minutes ... to a blissful state of deep calm and rejuvenating rest.



Samadhi



Learn the rare, ancient **OJAYA “Armor” Meditation** technique — online — with sublime video Lessons from the Earthborn Rainforest.

Even our **newest beginners** typically experience blissful states of **samadhi** that far surpass those who have practiced mindfulness and other meditation methods for 20-30 years.

secret to inner awakening.

Likewise, the great yogi sage Patanjali—revered master of classic **yoga meditation**—he also lists **samadhi** as the eighth limb in his “Eight Limbs of Yoga.”

Samadhi is **deep meditation**—and the master key to *effortless* mindfulness.

.....▼.....
Learn the ancient secrets of OJAYA ... and empower yourself with an “Armor” of clear, calm energy.

OJAYA is a rare gift from ancient meditation masters—a supremely potent **samadhi** technique that creates an “Armor” of peace, serenity and protection as you go about your day.

Quietly hidden and closely guarded for centuries, the **OJAYA** technique leads you quickly to the blissful and serene repose of deep **samadhi**.

The **OJAYA** technique is so potent that you do not need to meditate long hours. 10-20 minutes is sufficient to recharge you with clear, calm energy.

With these daily dips into the blissful ocean of your Being, a new awareness dawns within you ...

... *The sleeping depths of your consciousness begin to awaken.*

— Sukaishi David, loving Founder of the **OJAYA** Dharma Sangha

We’re a not-for-profit grassroots meditation school ... run 100% by volunteers. We’re working hard to bring peace of mind to a frazzled world.

Will you too fall in love with the ancient OJAYA “Armor” technique? Find out: ojaya.com

Empower yourself with an “Armor” of clear, calm energy ... begin the adventure FREE at:

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KINDRED SPIRITS

Interviews with wonderful & influential meditators



JOVANNA INTERVIEWS KIMBERLY & JESSAMYN

For this special “Health Issue” of Meditation Magazine, we interviewed two holistic health experts with different perspectives on what it looks like to live a happy, healthy life.

Words by Jovanna Benavente
Photos by Mona Loring & Katelyn Hughes

As she prepared to conduct these interviews, Jovanna was feeling her way into a new phase of her own health journey. Having gained 50+ pounds through pregnancy and nursing, Jovanna began to notice angry, abusive, and self-denigrating thought patterns that she was unconsciously using to force herself to lose weight. She wondered if it was necessary to sacrifice her mental health in order to improve her physical health (or vice versa). She began to question her beliefs about what it actually means to be “healthy,” and to wonder whether our cultural ideals for “how to be healthy” might actually be doing us more harm than good.

It is with these thoughts, feelings, and questions that Jovanna sat down to interview two world-renowned holistic health experts: Kimberly Snyder and Jessamyn Stanley. →

"YOU ARE ALLOWED TO BE HERE."

Jessamyn's words kept popping up in my mind as the horizon glowed with hues of pink and orange, the sun set low in the western sky, and Sky looked out in awe of it all from under a cozy blanket in her stroller.

Kevin and I have a long-standing tradition of going for sunset walks, and I'm grateful that we've been able to continue that ritual with baby Sky since she was just 4 days old. A part of me feels proud, for prioritizing my health in that one small way. Life as a new mom (and small business owner) in a worldwide pandemic can feel overwhelming at times, so taking the time to move my body through nature has been essential as I navigate this period of postpartum anxiety and depression.

Unfortunately, my "eating disorder voice" is almost always whispering in the background, convincing me that I don't deserve to be seen. Because I'm too fat.

I remember the first time I acknowledged the eating disorder voice. I was eight years old and I got invited to my first pool party! I was so excited... but I felt anxious, as I criticized the jiggle of my arms in the bathroom mirror.

Twenty years later, as I walk around the jogging track with baby Sky, the voice tries to convince me that I have to exercise harder, as punishment for gaining too much weight.

Suddenly, movement becomes something that my ED voice is commanding of me, rather than an enjoyable exercise that helps me feel happier, healthier, and stronger in my body. After so many years of therapy and self help books and meditation retreats, the self hatred is still overpowering.

I didn't realize until Jessamyn said, in her self-love meditation at the beginning of our interview, "You are allowed to be here," that a part of my ego had convinced me, for my entire life, that I didn't deserve to take up space if I wasn't deemed pleasing to look

at by Western standards (AKA, size 6 or smaller).

"While there is nothing wrong with wanting to change your body, it's important to know that you deserve to exist in any form.

"You are needed in this world.

"And so even if just for a moment, no matter what's coming next or where you just were, in this moment, remember that you are allowed to be here.

"Every scar, every wound, every struggle, every fear, every doubt, EVERY PIECE OF YOU is allowed to be here."

The Drive To Change: Healthy or Unhealthy?

It wasn't until that evening, walking around the track with Kevin & Sky, thinking about Jessamyn's beautiful words, that I wondered:

Have I, on some unconscious level, held onto the idea that "I'm not allowed to be here," as a way to drive myself to change?

Am I holding onto self-loathing as a tool to achieve my fitness goals?

Have I mistreated my body and mind for the sake of trying to achieve Western society's "ideals" of a beautiful and healthy woman?

And... if I have... should I be trying to let go of these thought patterns? Or are they actually helping me, driving me toward my goals?

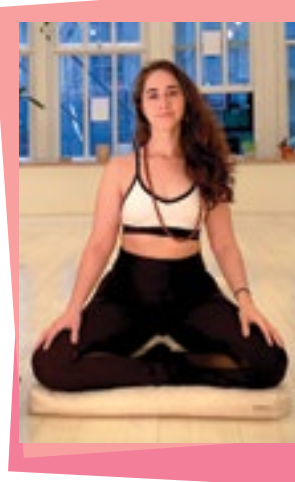
I know that I feel my best, on a holistic level, when I am working out every day (even if it's just a twenty minute walk), and eating minimally processed, plant based foods.

While my self-chastising may drive me to exercise more and count my calories – which in turn, may help me achieve my goals to become more "physically fit" – I also know

that it makes me feel anxious, stressed out, irritable and unhappy.

So what does it even mean to be "healthy?" Do we need to sacrifice the mental for the physical, or vice versa? Is there a way we can find balance between the two, or even cultivate both physical and mental health in a holistic, synergistic way?

Here are five insights I gleaned from my interviews with Kimberly and Jessamyn that helped me put my "health" into perspective, and find beautiful ways to love myself and move toward my fitness goals in health, happiness and harmony. →



Jovanna sits in the Three Jewels Meditation Studio in the East Village of Manhattan... one month before getting pregnant.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ASHE HARRIS

1. Use positive instead of negative motivation.

Ever since Ivan Pavlov began experimenting with conditioned responses in dogs, psychologists have been thinking about “positive” vs “negative” motivation. Positive motivation reinforces habits & behaviors through rewards (for example, “Do this job and I will give you money.”) Negative motivation reinforces habits & behaviors through punishments (“Disobey and get the whip!”)



My ED voice has been driving me through punishment and negative motivation for my entire life.

My ED voice was the jockey with the whip, and I was the horse. But has it actually been working?

Kimberly explained that if I was holding self-hatred for my body, the things I was doing to get fit would probably not even work.

When the body is tense and stressed, it goes into survival mode. When your body is in survival mode, the last thing it wants to do is get rid of fat.

Before I can achieve my goal, I have to let go of the thoughts and the expectations that are causing me mental distress.

Kimberly said that she had seen many clients struggle to lose weight under her nutrition plan despite following it to a T. It wasn't until they surrendered their self-loathing that their bodies shed the unnecessary weight.

“There is research that shows that the women who obsess the most about their weight, keep on more weight one year after pregnancy,” Kimberly explained.

“I’ve also had so many clients experience this struggle. There was one in particular, a famous actor who had just hired me as his 15th nutritionist. He would lose a little weight, then gain it back. It wasn’t until we worked with the mental-emotional body that he was finally able to lose 80 pounds.”

In a way, Kimberly was communicating the same thing that Jessamyn had, just in different words.

When I realize that I am allowed to be here, exactly as I am... the self-loathing begins to dissolve, and the ED voice loses its power to put me in states of stress & anxiety. Self loathing is the antithesis of self-love, and it can compromise the infinite potential that our bodies and minds possess.

Kimberly and Jessamyn reminded me that the key to our infinite potential as human beings is through self-care of the mind, body, and spirit.

Instead of “whipping myself into shape” and causing myself unnecessary stress & anxiety, I can choose happier, healthier, more positive motivations.

If I’m working out and I’m not going “hard enough,” and my ED voice says “you need to push yourself harder, to punish yourself,” I can nip that voice in the bud. I can reply: “Yes, I do want to exercise harder, but not with that attitude.” Then I can change the thought process to focus on more positive motivations. I can visualize how good I’ll feel once the endorphins start flowing, how satisfied and proud of myself I’ll feel after the workout, and how good I’ll feel as I see myself moving toward my health & fitness goals in the long-term.



2. Let go of spiritual perfectionism. It’s OK to struggle with self-acceptance and self-love.

If you follow Jessamyn’s career and Instagram, it seems like she is the Queen of self-love and self-acceptance. As if since the day she was born, she knew she was perfect, and wonders why everyone else doesn’t feel the same way.

So it felt fitting for Jessamyn to open our conversation by posing the question out loud: “What does it mean to love your Self? What does that look like?”

Jessamyn paused, looking away from the camera as she thought for a moment.

“Love is not just the happy feelings, it’s all the feelings. It’s everything. Everything is love.

“And so when we talk about self-love, the Hallmark

version of it gets supplemented sometimes... and it becomes this very ‘pretty to look at’ kind of experience.

“But I always find self-love to be so messy, very complicated, and hard.”

This acknowledgement at the beginning of our IG Live was so powerful, because in saying that, she gave everyone—including myself—permission to be human.

Jessamyn exudes no false pretenses of perfection or effortless self-love. By being vulnerable and honest about her own (sometimes rocky) self-love journey, she shows us that we can love ourselves and still have moments (or days) where it feels difficult to accept (let alone embrace) our bodies. And that’s okay! →

3. Transcend self-conscious thoughts and comparative judgments by looking at life (and yourself) from a higher perspective.

Having grown up as a “chubby” child, I often heard the people in my life criticizing their own bodies and the bodies of others. These judgmental speech patterns genuinely instilled me with a fear of “fit” people.

To this day—it doesn’t matter if I’m in the best shape of my life or if I’m dissatisfied with my body. If I meet someone who is in “good shape,” the first feeling that bubbles up when we meet is fear. Fear that the person is judging my body, feeling sorry for me, or looking down on me. It has been this way for as long as I can remember.

I felt that twinge of anxiety when Kevin told me that he had arranged an interview with Kimberly Snyder, the world-renowned Ayurvedic plant based nutritionist.

I usually try to stay behind the scenes (in both work and life; I have nearly perfected the art of the wallflower) but when Kevin told me about Kimberly, I knew I needed to face my fears and be a part of the conversation. With my head full of thoughts and emotions about my new post-baby-bod, there was a lot I wanted to discuss on the subject.

On the surface, Kimberly was the embodiment of all of my teenage fears. Tall, exotic looking, (seemingly) effortlessly skinny, plus intelligent and talented to boot. My ED brain had me shaking in anticipation before going live, on video, in front of our large (and growing) instagram audience, opposite Kimberly Snyder, at the heaviest weight I’ve ever been at seven months postpartum.

I was afraid that Kimberly would judge me. But

if I’m being painfully honest, I was the one being judgmental. There was zero judgment from her, there was only love, and camaraderie, and joy to be talking about her book that she is so (rightfully) proud of.

When we spoke to Kimberly about her Four Cornerstones Of Health & Happiness, the focus of her latest book *You Are More Than You Think You Are*, I experienced something that doesn’t happen very often around people that look like supermodels. Very soon after “meeting” Kimberly on Zoom, my anxieties and fears about her judging me for my body simply melted away. She was a beautiful Being in her human form, and I was a beautiful Being in my human form.

Kimberly reminded me that we are all beautiful souls in human bodies, and that while our bodily health is important, we don’t need to define ourselves in such a limited way.

“We all have to be in the physical world. The problem comes when you put your whole value, your whole self-worth, in the physical world.”

By focusing on the luminous beauty of existing as a conscious being in this Universe, I joined Kimberly on a higher plane... one where concepts of size, shape, and cultural ideals no longer came between us.

So instead of going through life self-conscious about my body, I now endeavor to keep a bigger-picture perspective. When I remember that we are all beautiful souls, and that the physical is just one aspect of our lives, and that we can love ourselves as we are, I feel more at peace and at home in my body, in this world, and with the people around me. →



“THE PROBLEM COMES WHEN YOU PUT YOUR WHOLE SELF-WORTH IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD.”

4. Realize that the self-critical thoughts may actually be coming from outside.

It's easy to think that our self-critical thoughts are coming from inside of ourselves. After all, they're arising inside of our minds... where else would they come from? When we think this way, we attribute the self-hatred to ourselves. We think of it as something that is part of us... something that we are doing to ourselves.

The truth is, our thoughts and feelings are not always our own. We are powerfully influenced by the culture and society around us.

For as long as I can remember, whenever I'd go to the doctor's office, I'd beg the nurses in a fervent whisper not to say my weight out loud, on the verge of a panic attack that my mother (or a random passerby) would overhear and be disappointed in me.

Even when I was 125 pounds and more fit than I'd ever been, I'll never forget being told by my pediatrician at seventeen that according to my height, I was actually ten pounds overweight. The inadequacy, embarrassment, and self-hatred that consumed me in that moment has haunted me for a lot of my life.

When I was just weeks from giving birth last year, feeling confident that I'd healed from my experience as a teen, all it took was a quick checkup and an insensitive (male) doctor to send me spiraling again. At eight months pregnant, the OB told me bluntly that I weighed "too much for a woman that is five feet tall." He didn't ask about my diet (whole foods, plant-based) or how often I exercised (an hour per day). He simply judged me by the numbers on my chart. In those ten minutes it felt like I'd allowed him to undo ten years of mental-health progress.

I remember sitting in my car after the appointment, crying and stewing in my self-hatred. On my drive home, with one hand on the wheel and the other cradling my daughter in my belly, I knew I had to let his comments go and move on... for her

sake, if not my own. The last thing I wanted was for her to somehow absorb the loathing that I was feeling towards myself and my body.

When I told Jessamyn about this experience, her empathy, compassion, and relatable humor helped me begin to let go.

"It'll ruin your whole f*cking day. Especially if you think 'Oh yeah, I'm doing a good job, I'm going to the doctor, I'm getting things checked out, I'm just making sure that everything's on the up-and-up...' and then they just fat shame you in a way that the medical industrial complex has trained them to do.

"Damning obesity is so normalized, that if you are ANY pounds over – whatever the amount of weight that you're supposed to be at whatever height – there's this idea that there's something wrong with you as a person. Because: 'How dare you.' And also: 'How could you be so stupid as to gain weight?'"

There are all these ideas that go along with it... none of which are acknowledging the human being who is literally just getting from Point A to Point B.

I think that that is where body acceptance is so crucial. At that exact stage. Being able to say, "I deserve to exist. Period." It does not matter what my body looks like; I deserve to be here."

And it's not just the medical systems that put these self-loathing thoughts in our heads; Jessamyn went on to explain that it can even be our economic systems:

"Capitalism relies on us hating ourselves."

If a marketer can get you to believe that there's something wrong with you, then he can sell you a product or service to fix it.

When we realize that our self-critical thoughts are not even really coming from our "deepest selves" – that they're "foreign agents" and not really "our own" – it becomes much easier to disown them, disavow them, and let them go. →



**"I DESERVE TO
EXIST. PERIOD."**



Kimberly Snyder flows through her own Dinacharya - her daily routine of healthy eating and movement.

5. Use routines to move consistently (instead of emotionally) toward your health goals.

The golden nugget of advice that Kimberly gave me about improving my health on a physical (and mental and emotional) level was the Ayurvedic principle of Dinacharya (Sanskrit: दिनचर्या meaning "daily-routine").

"The word in Sanskrit - it's a teaching in Ayurveda - is Dinacharya, which is daily rhythm and routine. It's very important.

"We may not have time to sit for an hour in meditation. We may not have time to make the most perfect meals for ourselves. But it's important to touch on all four cornerstones (food, body, emotions, and spirit) in your morning and evening practice."

"Dinacharya is sort of like the circadian rhythms that we see in nature. The rising sun, the fullness of the sun, and the sun goes down and it sets at the end of the day. It gives a rhythm to the day.

"And so it's very important for our nervous system (which is essential to keep our minds calm and our parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems balanced). Rhythm is a very important part of our day. Rhythm helps to regulate our digestive systems, our sleep rhythms, our immune systems, everything. Everything

functions better when we have this sense of rhythm."

The implementation of your own personal wellness rituals in your day to day life (whether it be dancing more or reading more) can truly shift your paradigm of the world and your life for the better.

In the past, I felt the need to hold onto self-hatred and negative self-talk because I thought I needed them, in order to push myself in the direction that I wanted to go. But once I started taking Kimberly's advice and implementing systems, structure, and routines into my wellness journey, I realized that I don't need all of those emotions in order to move in the right direction. The rhythms carry me along, so that I don't need to worry about it, and I don't need to cause myself all of that unnecessary stress.

When you set new wellness goals that you intend to become lifelong habits, it's important to commit to practicing them regularly from the get-go.

And always remember to have compassion and patience for yourself as you set time aside to prioritize your new practices. If you forget one day (or week, or years...), remember that tomorrow is a new day and you can always begin again. →



"RHYTHM IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF OUR DAY."

In conclusion...

At first glance, Jessamyn and Kimberly seem as different as two individuals could possibly be.

Jessamyn is a yoga teacher and cannabis enthusiast who challenges Western paradigms of beauty by proudly embracing and showing off her voluptuous (and often naked) body. Her authentic feed shows people that they can be proud of their bodies at any size, that shame around pleasure and sexuality is archaic. Jessamyn is a pioneer in redefining what a “healthy” and physically active person looks like, and is truly one of the most down-to-earth, kind and compassionate people I have ever spoken to.

Kimberly seems to be more of a “clean cut” celebrity nutritionist & wellness expert, doing the rounds on shows like Dr. Oz and Good Morning America, drinking room temperature green juice and keeping a rigorous workout schedule. Kimberly is also a strong and independent woman who has solo-traveled the entire world by herself three times, experienced the depths of single-motherhood – and beautifully transformed the grief of losing her mother into strength, purpose, and a passion for helping others live happier, healthier lives.

But beneath these superficial differences, Jessamyn and Kimberly share a profound wisdom and spiritual perspective on life. They have helped me (and thousands of others) to move through a difficult period in my own life, and to understand what it really means to be healthy.

I’m grateful that after taking some time to integrate and absorb their wisdom & advice, I can say that I love my Self and my body more than I ever have. While I still have a lot of work to do and experience difficult days of body dysmorphia and self-loathing, the acceptance and love for my body is growing every single day.

I genuinely believe that the reason for that is not only due to many hours of therapy or being blessed with a husband that tells me I’m beautiful all the time; I believe this evolution in self-love is because of people like Jessamyn and Kimberly who use their social media platforms to connect with people from all walks of life.

They don’t let societal conditions or norms stand in their way; they unconditionally stand in their power. Social media can feel like a terrible, mind numbing “place” but it has been a huge blessing in my life to be exposed to influencers like Jessamyn

and Kimberly; amazing women who are changing the modern world by challenging the arbitrary and unfair standards of society and Western beauty, and providing us with healthier ways to relate to our bodies and our minds.

As we spend our lives unlearning self-hatred, we will all face challenging days and circumstances. Every day (but especially on days that we’re feeling low), it’s essential to take the time we need to center ourselves, and take care of not just our physical health, but our mental health as well.

I can say from personal experience that if you prioritize your physical health at the expense of your mental health, when you finally see that magic number on the scale, it won’t feel nearly as good as you’d hoped.

That’s why it’s important to remember to remain compassionate toward ourselves, even (especially!) while we move toward our health goals.

Jessamyn encapsulated this wisdom perfectly, in the meditation at the very beginning of our Instagram live interview:

“While there is nothing wrong with wanting to change your body, it’s important to know that you deserve to exist in any form.

“You are needed in this world.

“And so even if just for a moment, no matter what’s coming next or where you just were, in this moment, remember that you are allowed to be here.

“Every scar, every wound, every struggle, every fear, every doubt, EVERY PIECE OF YOU is allowed to be here.

“You don’t have to fix your way of being or make any adjustments. You don’t have to explain yourself.

“Then when you’re ready, and it

feels like it’s time, you can let your eyes blink open...

“And find everything where it’s always been.” ●



Jovanna walks through the forest (with six-month-old Sky strapped to her chest), slowly befriend her post-partum body.



TO WATCH OUR INTERVIEWS WITH JESSAMYN AND KIMBERLY ON INSTAGRAM, JUST POINT YOUR PHONE CAMERA AT A QR CODE AND CLICK THE LINK THAT POPS UP TO ACCESS THE VIDEOS!

“EVERY SCAR,
EVERY WOUND,
EVERY STRUGGLE,
EVERY FEAR,
EVERY DOUBT,
EVERY PIECE OF
YOU IS ALLOWED
TO BE HERE.”

Inside Secrets of World-Class Mental Health Training

An Interview with Ricky Wysocki

Words by Forrest Neal
Photography by Lauren Lakeberg



"Please join Ricky in a moment of silence for his sister, Lauren."

These words pierced the hearts of thousands in attendance, as the top-ranked disc golfers in the world faced off on a windy day in Emporia, Kansas.

2021 was a challenging year for every human on Earth, and Disc Golf World Champion Ricky Wysocki was facing one of the greatest challenges of his life - playing competitively, immediately after losing his sister to cancer.

After throwing a shot out of bounds into a lake, Ricky found himself in a difficult spot. He needed to throw a risky putt on an island, with the danger of landing in the water again, just to save par. While the other competitors who landed out of bounds took safe shots to cut their losses, Ricky had no intentions of taking the easy way out.

"I think my sister threw that putt in the basket for me." As the disc left Ricky's hand, floated majestically through the air, and slammed into the chains, the

entire gallery of spectators roared with cheers. It was the kind of heartwarming moment that anyone could feel, even if you've never heard of Disc Golf.

It's Ricky's ability to persevere through adversity that makes him such a fascinating athlete.

Forrest Neal: "Ricky, how are you able to remain so calm and composed on the Disc Golf course in the face of so many challenges?"

Ricky Wysocki: "This year I won Player of the Year, Disc Golf Pro Tour Points... I won a lot of different stats that measure a great season. I think that's a direct correlation with me doing Meditation, Breathing Exercises, and Ice Baths. All of the health and wellness stuff I'm doing definitely correlates with having one of my best seasons ever."

FN: "How influential do you think these exercises have been with your ability to manage stress in your everyday life, outside of Disc Golf?"

Ricky Wysocki has used meditation and mindfulness to become one of the top disc golf players in the world.



RW: "I've noticed that I handle adversity a lot easier. I feel a benefit mentally when I do those [exercises]. It's almost like a reset. It resets what you're thinking about, so you can reset the stress, or reset the adversity that just happened in your life, or whatever it may be. That's why I think it's so important."

FN: "How beneficial do you think exercises like meditation would be for people who have 'normal' jobs, who may not be pursuing something to the world championship level that you have successfully accomplished?"

RW: "You don't need to be a professional Disc Golfer for [meditation] to benefit you. It increases the quality of your life no matter what you are pursuing. I just happen to be pursuing being a professional Disc Golfer and the best player in the world, so it helps me in that way. The overall optimization of health can be beneficial to anybody, from a professional athlete like me, to someone working a job that wants to have mental clarity and peace of mind while at work."

Days before our conversation, Ricky signed a four-year \$4,000,000 contract with Dynamic Discs - one of the most lucrative contracts in Disc Golf history.

I've known for a long time that mental health practices like meditation can enable people to experience performance-enhancing cognitive benefits, and even to perform at a world-class level. Still, I was astonished that Ricky described it as a fundamental reason for his success.

If these exercises and activities can enable a professional athlete to perform at a level beyond his competition, how can you use them to perform at a world-class level in your own life, and benefit in the same way? ●

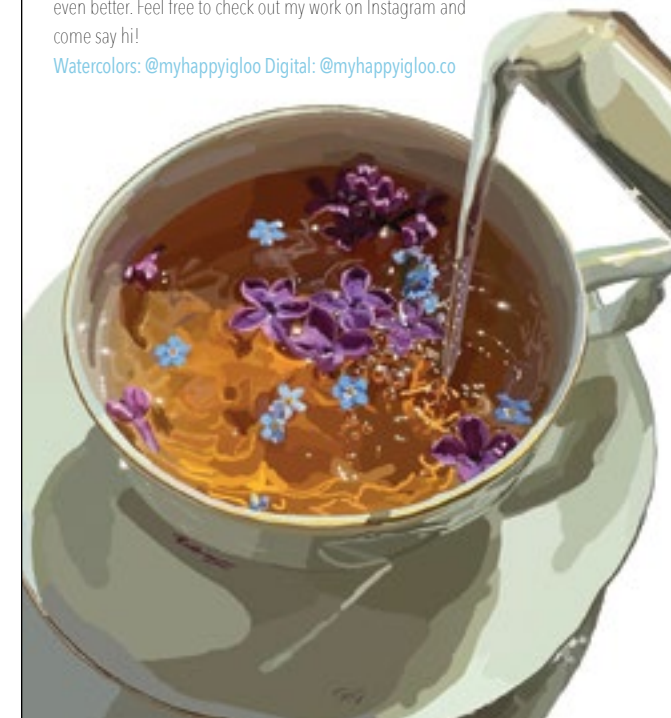
TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW, SIMPLY POINT YOUR PHONE CAMERA AT THIS QR CODE AND CLICK THE LINK THAT POPS UP!



Hi, I'm Ridhima Gupta!

I made the Thich Nhat Hanh portrait at the beginning of this issue. I am an Illustrator and I work with watercolors too. Digitally, I mostly paint portraits and objects. And with watercolors; landscapes, galaxies, forests, etc. Art has always been a meditative therapy for me! Even looking at it helps me relieve stress, and creating it is even better. Feel free to check out my work on Instagram and come say hi!

Watercolors: @myhappygloo Digital: @myhappygloo.co



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The Healing Power of Meditation

In a MedMag exclusive interview, Tibetan Lama Phakyab Rinpoche describes how meditation saved his foot from amputation. This is his story.

Interview & story by Phil N. Rossner

Throughout history, there have been stories that have conveyed the power of the human body, given the right circumstances, to heal itself. Every religion and spiritual practice can point to numerous instances where an individual has been cured of a terrible disease, regained mobility after being told they would never walk again, or even brought back to life after all indications showed that they were dead.

In those cases where the chance of healing is not considered possible without extreme intervention, and yet a full healing is somehow realized, this is often seen as something miraculous as there doesn't seem to be anything tangible that happened which directly led to the profound healing, particularly as dictated by Western medical norms.

Growing up in Tibet, a young Buddhist monk would later be recognized by the Dalai Lama as the 8th reincarnation of the Phakyab Rinpoche, a beloved Lama from Kham, the town in Tibet where the young monk had been born. He is quoted as saying "I grew up sensing nature's energy, both within me and outside me. This energy stretched outward from my mind, reaching toward infinity, and it returned to me in the form of vibrations of universal love."

Through his spiritual trainings, Phakyab Rinpoche learned a number of powerful meditative practices which would later be integral to a profound personal healing... a healing that has since baffled Western physicians and has been considered by some as a miracle.

In 1998, Phakyab Rinpoche was imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese Police in Tibet after being charged with "actions aimed at destabilizing the motherland." After 3 months of imprisonment, he ended up in a military hospital due to the injuries he sustained during torture. Fortunately, he managed to escape and, in April 2000, he was successful in his attempt to cross the Himalayas to Nepal and India.

Eventually, he was granted full

political asylum by the U.S. and spent many months in a New York hospital due to the serious ailments that arose as a result of his imprisonment by the Chinese. These included spinal tuberculosis, abnormal liver function, type 2 diabetes and anemia. However, the most serious issue was the severe infection in his right ankle, which had become gangrenous.

The NY physicians informed him that they would have to amputate his right leg as, without amputation, the sepsis would grow in his body due to the gangrene, leading to septic shock and death.

As detailed in his book "How Meditation Saved My Life," he relates that, despite extreme pain, his inner voice warned him over and over again - "don't amputate!" This led Rinpoche to send an urgent message to HH The Dalai Lama, requesting his advice. The reply from His Holiness read, "Why do you seek healing outside of yourself? You have within you the wisdom that heals, and once healed, you will teach the world how to heal."

And so... with his vision set, Rinpoche's long path to healing was initiated.

Since becoming a Buddhist monk when he was still very young, Rinpoche had received a great deal of training in a number of esoteric meditation practices that were specific to Tibetan Buddhist meditation practice, so the meditations that The Dalai Lama had prescribed were already well known to him.

One of the practices that he used is probably the one best known to practitioners in the West - Tonglen. In this practice, the meditator visualizes that, as he breathes in, he is pulling in a "dark smoke" of negative energy or sickness into the centre of his heart, where it is transformed into a brilliant, healing light. This light is then, in visualization, sent throughout the body as well as to all beings in the world and beyond.

Another practice that Rinpoche used is known in Tibet as "Tsa Lung," which

results in clearing energy channels within the body of blockages that occur during sickness and disease.

And finally, he used meditation on the Medicine Buddha. This Bodhisattva (a person who is able to reach nirvana), promises to help eradicate pain, disease, and disabilities of all kinds, as well as promote optimal physical and mental strength.

Phil: So through these intensive meditation practices, within 3 years you were completely healed?

Rinpoche: Yes... there was not too much change within the first 6 months, but after 7 or 8 months the gangrene infection stopped and the color of the skin started changing back to normal and I started to be able to put pressure on it when standing. After 8 months, my overall feeling was much, much better. Then I checked back at the hospital and the doctors were really shocked! They said they had never seen anything like that (healing) before. Some doctors said "Oh... you should teach me how to do these meditations!"

Phil: So Rinpoche, were you at all surprised that your healing was so complete? Many people, I believe, referred to it as a miracle healing?



Phakyab Rinpoche shows his previously gangrenous ankle to Meditation Magazine correspondent Phil Rossner via Zoom



Rinpoche: Yes, people said it is impossible... a miracle! Many doctors said "I have never healed gangrene!" And I said... it's the power of the mind and anybody could do it - I am not special! I am a normal human being and we all have mind powers!

However, if you have negative emotions, then you will get more physically weak and have less energy. Then you get more illness and a disease comes on stronger. But if you do meditations, your mind is peaceful and happy and it really helps.

Phil: In your book, you say that "compassion is the key" and yet we see so much division in the world today. Why do you think this is?

Rinpoche: If you have no compassion, you will never get inner peace. You need to open your heart and meditate and then you will have compassion, love and kindness.

This is the opposite to being selfish, where you are closed inside and you have negative emotions which also affects your friends and family. Greed, anger and ego all make you suffer! But when you have inner peace and compassion, you can help others and then you feel more happy inside yourself.

Phil: You know, Rinpoche, meditation and mindfulness practice has become very popular in modern times, whereas when I first started my meditation practice almost 35 years ago, it was seen

as something quite strange. However, I think many of those who now start some kind of meditation practice seem to expect immediate results as that is their experience in this modern society.

Rinpoche: Yes, many Western students want to start meditation in one of the very high level meditations! However, they must first start by making a real foundation with Shamatha (calm abiding) meditation and then the other levels will come much easier. You need to have focus and be mindful - like a bird which can only fly with both wings.

If you are just starting, meditate for 5 or 10 minutes. It doesn't really matter how long, as long as you can maintain mindfulness and concentration. Beginning is really difficult - you have to concentrate, but if you can maintain mindfulness, you can make the meditation longer and it becomes easier to maintain focus.

Phil: Rinpoche, it seems that once we mindfully shift the focus off ourselves, personally, and start sending out love and compassion to all beings everywhere, a really profound healing takes place within us. My wish is that the whole world will come to know and put into effect your beautiful message of healing and compassion! Thank you so much!

Rinpoche: Thank you... and to those who see this interview, I would like to say - practice meditation, compassion and love and then you can get inner peace and happiness! ●



From NFL Running-Back...



to Meditation Teacher

The Story of Prince Daniels, Jr.

Words by Forrest Neal. Photography by Baltimore Ravens

As I began falling to the ground, my body made a loud “THUD”. It wasn’t graceful, it was as if the life inside of me had been taken away in a single moment. When I began to lose feeling in my arms and legs after taking a big hit one day during football practice in high school, I began to seriously ponder the totality of my existence as if it was finished. Oddly enough, I was experiencing peace and serenity while laying on the ground with my teammates and coaches surrounding me. I could hear birds chirping and I could smell the scent of freshly cut grass. I could feel the wind blowing across my face and it seemed as if these sensations were an entirely novel experience to mankind. It was as if a veil had been lifted and now my vision was clear in a way that I had never experienced before. This single event may have been the very first time in my entire life that I was completely still and it was such a profound experience that I’ve struggled to find others who could appreciate the significance of it, until I met PDJ.

When I had the opportunity to speak with Prince Daniels Jr (PDJ), I leaped head first at the opportunity. Prince has achieved many goals that even the most elite of athletes only dream of accomplishing. Having broken records in college and having played multiple seasons in the NFL, he was the star athlete that many kids grow up hoping, wishing, and praying to become. What I didn’t expect was that Prince had a similar experience when a series of injuries cut his NFL career short and that he experienced a transformational shift in his life caused by his meditation practice.

During the interview, Prince shared how meditation stopped him from committing suicide while he was experiencing an identity crisis after an injury cut his career short.

“I had a Mossburg shotgun... I was prepping to kill myself.” Just when it seemed as though Prince had given up hope, he describes the defining moments of his life while in the room he planned to kill himself.

PDJ: “I look to the left and I see a light shining down on my meditation pillow and I’m thinking ‘boy... get out of here and stop playing with my emotions.’ So I decided, I’m going to give myself 1 hour and if nothing happens, I’m going to carry out my plan.” Soon after beginning with his meditation practice, “I was in a space that was so quiet, I was like the mechanic or engineer of my thoughts.”

He spoke about how nothing particularly helpful was happening during the meditation so he began to psyche himself up to kill himself.

PDJ: “Then I asked myself ‘What are you doing? And the voice in my head yelled back ‘KILL MYSELF.’” After the third time that he asked himself this question, “That’s when I had this realization - ‘I’m about to kill... my... self...’ - and that’s when I heard ‘DING DING DING’ my timer for the meditation was going off. So now the timer goes off and I’m sucked out of that space thinking ‘Whoa, whoa, whoa, what was that?’” Tears start streaming down my face and I’m thinking, ‘Whatever that was, I’m going to be in the presence of that and chase that for the rest of my life.’”

Since then, Prince has been involved in sharing the practice of meditation as a mindset and mental health coach for elite athletes and he’s also written books to help us to incorporate a meditative practice into our everyday lives. When asked why he decided to write *Mindfulness For The Ultimate Athlete*, Prince responded, “We are all athletes in this game of life, we all have to jump over hurdles and we all have goals we want to achieve.”

Things became very interesting after hearing this because Prince was essentially drawing the comparison that everyday life in the modern world is equivalent to an athletic event that we are all currently participating in and that by incorporating a meditative practice into our everyday lives, we can begin to improve our performance in many different aspects of our lives.

PDJ: “We grow up not really understanding how to relax. We tell people ‘Relax! Just relax!’, but that’s like telling a blind person [to imagine the color yellow]. For a long time, I wanted to know how to relax. What I tell people from what I’ve learned is that in order to understand relaxation, you have to understand the opposite, which is tension.”

This statement in itself led me to a profound realization that connected many dots for me in terms of the messages that other great meditation teachers have been sharing along with Prince. That realization was that there is a correlation between suffering and happiness. An example of this correlation is that many people of the younger generations in western culture are experiencing an existential crisis and they

are looking for something to make them happy.

They have been strongly conditioned by our culture to believe that you have to do something or buy something to earn happiness. The truth is happiness is already available for them to experience right where they are, but they can’t truly appreciate how great things are already because they haven’t suffered enough to allow themselves to let go and see the beauty in their life circumstances as they already are. This doesn’t mean that we need to experience exorbitant levels of pain and suffering in order to truly feel happiness, but it is possible to use purposefully stressful exercises to experience the result of peace and relaxation as the natural result of completing the exercise.

One of the more interesting examples of an exercise is a Guided Meditation routine that Prince led Kevin and me through during the interview, and part of the exercise was to take a deep breath and squeeze all the muscles in our bodies for a few moments and then to exhale and release the tension to notice how different it feels to experience stress vs experiencing relaxation. In this way, we can familiarize ourselves with what peace and relaxation feel like so that we know if the activities we are participating in are causing us to experience stress or relaxation.

There are many great lessons like this that PDJ shares in *Mindfulness For The Ultimate Athlete*, but after learning about his book written for children titled *Danny Yukon and the Secrets of the Amazing Lamp*, I began to see how much this work mattered to him and how far he was willing to go to share these beneficial mental health exercises with everyone who could benefit from them. “What I went through, I don’t want any kid to go through that.” After having spoken with Prince for over an hour, I could sense his heart of gold and his desire to make the world a better place. I asked him, “What will the world look like when your work here is finished?”

PDJ: “Everybody on earth practicing meditation for 1 second. Just 1 second, together. We are so powerful, we don’t even know how powerful we are. We can constantly shift our environment and the way that we live. So if we could get everyone, just for one second, to think about world peace or to think about compassion or to think about neutralizing violence for peace and experiencing a balance to make the world a better place. We’re gonna shift the way that

we view things and the way that we see people. We will start operating from our spirit or our heart and doing that will enrich and enhance the world.”

Prince is not only a clear example of a role model for athletes but also as a human in modern society as well. Speaking with him truly validated the experience I had that one day during football practice where my injury took place and the inspiration I gained from it. This is the experience of stillness through meditation that Prince is speaking about. I wouldn’t recommend you find stillness through an injury like what happened to me, but stillness can be a transformational experience in whatever way it finds you. That’s exactly the reason why I’m capable of successfully pursuing the work I love doing, which is speaking with highly influential people like PDJ to discuss how these transformational exercises are making a positive change in the lives of people around the world. ●



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WRITINGS

Nuggets of wisdom to feed your monkey mind



WHAT DOES A HEALTHY BODY LOOK LIKE?

Celebrated yoga teacher and social justice activist Dianne Bondy challenges society's preconceptions of what 'healthy' looks like.

Photography by Jason Amlin

"One body type is not better than the other"

What does a healthy body look like? This is a question that comes up for me almost daily. A quick google search of healthy bodies displays an overrepresentation of lean muscular mostly white attractive bodies. Fitness and diet culture (aka wellness industry) has for decades created a very narrow view of what a healthy body looks like. This view aligns specifically with current trending beauty ideals that are largely steeped in European beauty standards, white supremacy, pseudoscience and dare I say, plastic surgery.

One thing I have learned after over 30+ years of "wellness" community is that you cannot tell how healthy someone is by the body they occupy. As a culture, I believe we are beginning to acknowledge that skinny doesn't necessarily mean healthy.

Body Mass Index aka BMI is based on an outdated and problematic way to collect data on individual health. Determined by many health professionals as nonsensical. The BMI was created in the 1830s by Adolphe Quetelet, an academic who studied astronomy, mathematics, statistics, and sociology. He was not a physician and did not study medicine. The purpose of the calculation was to study human growth and was never intended to measure individuals' health but to measure populations by comparing height and weight to what was perceived as normal. Beware of health professionals using this to measure your health. It is a mathematical equation not an indicator of health.

I subscribe to the philosophy of Health and Every Size (HAES®) No matter what body we are in we can optimize our health by adopting habits that nourish our bodies, our minds, and our energy.

A great illustration of being healthy and strong at any size is when we look to the most elite athletes of our time-Olympians. Olympians are considered

"There is no one way to have a healthy body"

to be some of the strongest and healthiest human specimens. When we look at the body diversity among Olympians, especially the most current athletes, we can clearly see that body size and body weight does not matter. Weight is not a good determinant of good health. There are much better measures such as energy, stamina, Vo2 outputs, endurance, blood pressure, heart rate, happiness, sleep patterns and emotional well-being; these are the key determinants of health.

We have been conditioned to believe that there is one idealized body type for all of us. For women, the ideal is slim, athletic and not too muscular with toned abs. Not too big or bulky. For men, the ideal is very lean, defined and very muscular men. These ideals are near impossible to achieve or maintain for the average human. The pictures we often see are altered reality to create an idea of perfection. This is unattainable for the vast majority of us.

There is no one way to have a healthy body. We are all built so incredibly differently. Our bodies are our bodies, they deserve respect, kindness and consideration. They are doing the best they can for us each and every day. Our body types are unique and based on our genetics. One body type is not better than the other – they are just different and the culmination of thousands of years of ancestry and evolution.

Your body is a custom creation designed especially for you. I am a "thicc" woman and no matter what I do I always default to "thicc" which is my natural healthy state. My body is the happiest and healthiest there. My body can run, ride a bike, roller skate, swim, do yoga, pilates and lift weights. I love these things as my mindful intentional movement practices. My body also can love, support and nurture the people in my life by allowing me to be present, joyful and connected. ●

REFERENCES: LYNDICOHEN.COM/BLOG/2016-08-09-5-THINGS-OLYMPIC-BODIES-TEACH-US-ABOUT-HEALTH/ELEMENTAL-MEDIUM.COM/THE-BIZARRE-AND-RACIST-HISTORY-OF-THE-BMI-7D8DC2AA338B NPR.ORG/TEMPLATES/STORY/STORYID=106268439; HAESCOMMUNITY.COM PHOTOGRAPHY: UNSPLASH / ANTHONY SHKRABA, PEXELS / KAWAJI OGINO, BUDGERON BACH, ARMIN RIMOLD, FREEPIK



"Our bodies are our bodies, they deserve respect, kindness and consideration"

MYUNG SUNG

The Korean Art of Living Meditation

Change Your Perspective, Change Your Life
with The Three Pillars of Myung Sung:
Meditation, Medicine & Movement

Words by Dr Jenelle Kim

What if all your struggles in life -- in work, relationships, parenting, health, or whatever else is causing you stress -- could become less difficult? What if you could achieve a new level of awareness that allowed you to see yourself, others, and your path in life more clearly? While it may sound too good to be true, and it certainly won't happen overnight, the ancient Korean philosophy known as Myung Sung teaches us that it is possible.

Ancient Wisdom Meets Modern Day Life

Myung Sung means living meditation. It's a lifestyle practice that originated with East Asian philosophers and is rooted in the teachings of the Tao. It has

been passed down for centuries, helping people learn how to place themselves beyond the persisting negative influences in life, such as stress and conflict, and connect with the limitless reserves of natural energy that exist all around us. With Myung Sung, you learn techniques to change your habits so that you're investing in your own health, happiness, and longevity every day.

As the daughter of a Korean monk, Myung Sung has been a way of life for me. It helped me grow my own business, raise a family, and achieve my lifelong goal of writing a book, and it can help you, too. In my opinion, the best way to learn about Myung Sung is to start with the 3 Ms -- meditation, medicine, and movement. →



PHOTOGRAPHY: "OWNED BY" ELEVATED PUBLIC RELATIONS LLC

The 3 Ms of Myung Sung Living Meditation

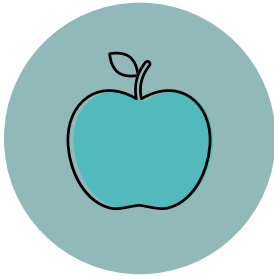


MEDITATION

When most people think of meditation, they picture someone sitting still in complete silence. With Myung Sung, this is not necessarily the case. Instead of taking time away from your busy life, it is important to incorporate the techniques of meditation and mindfulness into every action you take. For example, when you feel your mind drifting or you feel like your mind is frenzied with thoughts of endless to-do's, or you just feel out of sorts, take a moment to focus on your breath, ground yourself and give a thought to what a calm meditative state feels like; then, move forward. This is a practice, and the more disciplined in it you are, the more the benefits will reveal themselves to you—just like traditional seated meditation. The difference is that you are able to develop the ability to quickly tap into this mode—and stay in it—throughout your day. You learn to clear your mind of wandering thoughts and fleeting emotions and tap into a deeper peace.

When we live in this meditative mindset, we are more in tune with ourselves and the world around us. We're able to see situations from the perspective of others and think through our decisions more carefully. We're able to deepen our relationships and gain a new depth of self-knowledge and understanding. As your way of thinking changes, you will begin to notice an impact on your life.

It's important to remember, though, that we are not just our minds. In order to live in a meditative mindset, you must take care of your whole self and follow through with action. This in turn helps to broaden your perspective, or zoom out, so that you can see life more clearly - the people and situations that occur around you - and through this you can act correctly from a solid and grounded place.



MEDICINE

When ancient Eastern practitioners spoke about medicine, they did not only mean what you consume when you're sick or injured but how you care for your body every day to ensure it is functioning at its most optimal.

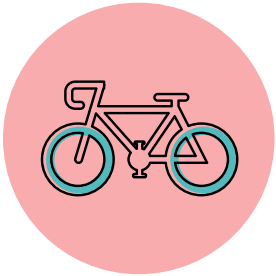
When we begin to live more mindfully, we become more aware of our own condition and can make better choices to improve our health. To become the best versions of ourselves, we need to listen to our bodies and provide them with the support and nourishment they need. Natural foods, especially herbs, adaptogenic mushrooms, and vegetables, are packed with nutrients and antioxidants that fuel our bodies and minds with what we need to thrive. In Traditional Oriental Medicine, we often look to the middle of the body for the root of health or illness. When you are choosing foods to eat, you can ask yourself if the processing of that food will slow your digestion down, drain your energy, or promote a proper flow that helps your body assimilate the nutrients and eliminate them properly. Often, with that initial question, your body will give you the answer.

Eastern practitioners also emphasized the importance of movement as a key element of medicine. Movement helps us reduce stress, improve circulation, strengthen our organ systems, relieve tension, and open our meridian systems, which improves our overall health and longevity.

The 3 Pillars

These three elements-- meditation, medicine, and movement-- are the pillars of Myung Sung, because they connect us back to the universe and our true selves. With Myung Sung, we carry the peace and clarity of meditation with us in every moment, which allows us to become the best versions of ourselves.

If you would like to learn more, like the 8 Keys to begin practicing the techniques for yourself, visit JenelleKim.com. To order *Myung Sung: The Korean Art of Living Meditation*, visit major retailers including Amazon. ●



MOVEMENT

In Myung Sung, the freedom to move while you meditate is not just an accommodation for our busy lives, but a key element of the practice. When we are mindful of our movements, even during simple, everyday tasks such as washing the dishes, we're able to become more aware of how our actions affect our minds. Creating a stronger mind-body connection also helps us learn to feel the natural energy that exists within us, our chi, and the flow of the universe around us.

When we are stressed, we can feel our chi become stagnant. We often notice this when our thinking becomes sluggish and foggy, our muscles feel tight and tense, or we just feel drained and unmotivated.

Just like with meditation, the key is to not just view movement as an activity you partake in when you have the time, but as a key part of your lifestyle. While going to the gym works for some people, you can also add short bursts of movement throughout your day, or meet with friends to go on a walk after work. The important point of movement is to get your blood and qi (vital energy) flowing properly and consistently so that you do not become sluggish or stagnant. Proper flow and function are the keys to ultimate health and beauty.

AN UPDATE ABOUT ERIC ADAMS

When we interviewed Eric Adams in 2019, he was a long-shot idealistic candidate for Mayor of NYC. He was that vegan meditation guy. Well, now he's the mayor of NYC.

Words by Kevin Ellerton. Photography by Zheng Yang



For our first national issue, back in 2019, we interviewed some amazing people. We interviewed Trevor Hall (Jovanna's favorite musician) and Wim Hof (my favorite meditation teacher), among others. We were living the dream!

When we interviewed Eric Adams for that issue, we only allocated five pages for his feature. He was running for Mayor of New York City, and we

supported his campaign... but, to be honest... we didn't think he would win!

Adams is an idealist – a passionate proponent of plant-powered proteins, an animal advocate who fought for the rights of the ducks and the geese, who successfully implemented meatless Mondays across NYC hospitals and schools – and of course a dedicated meditator, who wore his mala beads to our interview.

We've all heard the story before. Compassionate Idealist Crushed By Power Hungry Candidate. Again and again, that same old story left me jaded, disillusioned with the idea that a genuinely kind and well-intentioned human could attain a position of significant power in the United States, to effect the kinds of changes that could actually help make our world a happier, healthier, more peaceful, kind and loving place.

Well, Adams surprised us all when he beat out a crowded field (including big-name candidates like Andrew Yang and Curtis Sliwa) to become the new Mayor of New York City. He now holds the most powerful mayoral position in the US, most recently held by Bill DeBlasio, Michael Bloomberg, and Rudy Giuliani. Eric Adams took office on January 1st, 2022, as the 110th Mayor of NYC.

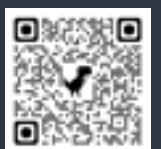
We generally avoid political topics in this magazine. Political conversations have a tendency toward argument and conflict, rather than peace, love and happiness. While many meditators (like Mr. Adams) are “engaged” in the world of politics, fighting to make the world a better place by implementing policies based in compassion, kindness and love, Meditation itself is something that transcends the conflicts of our world.

Meditation is bigger than our petty disputes... it's bigger than our civilizations, our species, and our planet... it's something that connects us with Consciousness, the Universe, and Existence Itself.

We don't yet know how the Adams Administration will turn out. There are, of course, some famously pessimistic aphorisms regarding the efficacy of good intentions. It's also probably prudent to accept the fact that we never really know a man until we've seen how he acts in a position of power.

I just wanted to include this update here, in this Health Issue... to celebrate the fact that, at least here in NYC, there is a glimmer of hope for a healthier, happier future, with a compassionate idealistic humanitarian meditator at the helm, implementing health-and-happiness focused policies for NYC's 8.8 million residents, and hopefully propagating massive ripples of love, kindness, health and happiness into the rest of the world. ●

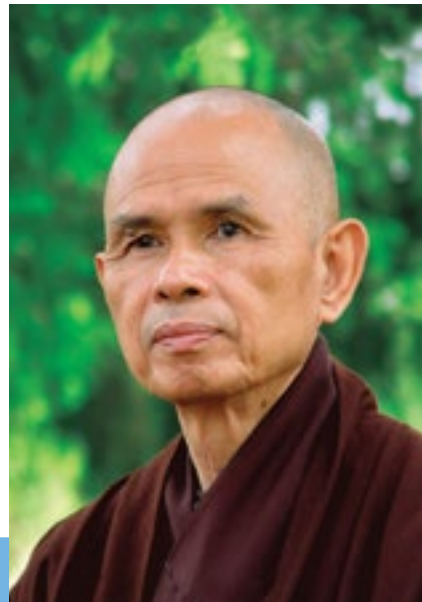
TO WATCH OUR INTERVIEW WITH THE NEW MAYOR OF NYC (!!) SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH THE CAMERA ON YOUR PHONE, AND CLICK ON THE LINK TO OPEN THE PAGE:



“His book *The Miracle of Mindfulness* was my introduction to mindfulness and it changed my life.”
Anne Lamarre

“I never met my teacher. But the teacher arrives when the student is ready. Sitting next to my room facing the beautiful Oregon coast I could see the waves beat the shore with a loud thud. On a normal day I would be so excited to be there. That day we had come to do the last rite of our beloved pet dog Caffea. The grief was overwhelming that no one was visible around me. Not even my family. Then my younger daughter gave me a book of a Buddhist monk that I could not pronounce. I did not want to be rude and hence I read his inserts. There is no death. When clouds become rain the form changes but the water is still present. I felt a deep sense of relief that no one was able to tell me. Since then my dearest teacher has always been with me when I’m in pain”
Praseeda Sridharan

“He was one of my favorite people. He opened up my heart to receiving love. No one else has ever been able to do for me what Tay did. I will always be grateful for his courage, strength, kindness, and the mark he left on me and the planet.”
livingzenwithren



REMEMBERING THICH NHAT HANH

Meditations on life and death

Thich Nhat Hanh (known as Thay to his students) passed away peacefully on January 22nd, 2022, in Hue, Vietnam – the beautiful seaside town where he was born. He was 95 years old.

To the world, Thay is known as the Buddhist Monk who stood with MLK, for peace and love and civil rights; who opposed the Vietnam War, and provided a shining example for a generation of Engaged Buddhists around the world.

To those who knew him, he was a profound teacher (and student) of Dharma (the nature of Reality).

When Jovanna and I stayed at his Blue Cliff Monastery in upstate New York, we heard Thay’s beautiful teachings on life, death, and inter-being: “When the cloud is no longer in the

sky, it doesn’t mean the cloud has died.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

The cloud becomes the rain, the rain becomes the tree, the tree becomes the paper you hold in your hand... and so the cycle of nature flows.

Humans are born, eat a bunch of food, go back to the Earth, feed the worms, which feed the plants, which feed more humans... and so the cycle of nature flows. While

many look at death as “the end,” Thay looked at life and death as a never ending cycle, the ever flowing evolution of Existence

We asked members of the Meditation Magazine community on Facebook (and Thay’s FB community as well) to post memories of their experiences with Thich Nhat Hanh and his teachings. These are their stories. ●



“I fondly remember meeting Thay for the first time at Camp Swig in the hills outside Sacramento in 1993 and sharing hugging meditation with him. The sweetest and most grounded individual I have ever met. A lotus for you, dearest Thay”
Phil Rossner
(aka Avinash Tâm)

“During my first Mindfulness Retreat, Aug. 2005 in Québec, while sitting and listening to the teachings of TNH... tears would stream down my face... I first felt ashamed! Then, after a couple of days, I finally realized that these were tears of Joy and Gratitude! I had finally met my True Teacher! Thay’s teachings are like the soft and gentle rain. Deeply nourishing and nurturing The Mother Earth, within us!”
Ghislaine Rabin

“I’m starting to learn from and embrace my suffering, allowing compassion that is being born to be my guide. Thank you Thay for giving me the light.”
Lejla Pasalic

“You didn’t have to know him to feel he was your dearest friend. You didn’t have to meet him to know he loved you, fully, as you are.”
Janelle Rose

A cloud can never die.
A cloud can become snow, or hail or rain.
but it is impossible for a cloud to pass from being into non-being.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Spring and winter are both present in the moment.
The young leaf and the dead leaf are really one.

Let us enter the dimension of oneness and see the cherry tree blossom in winter.

Thich Nhat Hanh



ILLUSTRATION BY ROSSINA MENDEZ

“My favorite memory of Thay will always be: him walking to a small tree en route to the lecture hall with two thousand educators, in the early morning of our retreat, and stopping, and sitting, and contemplating a glass of tea as it caught the rays of the rising sun. I was lucky to be close by and witness the entire ceremony. Meanwhile another teacher behind me was complaining that ‘I want to hear him talk! Why is he sitting? I’m getting wet (there was dew on the grass).’ I laughed inside because the stopping, and the appreciation of the tea and what created it, was the whole point of the lesson, and Thay did not have to say a word! The retreat was held in August, 2013 at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario.”

Nancy Beiman

How Meditation Healed My Body

By Abhishek Ghosh, PhD, Founder of Bleuauras

My PhD Supervisor always encouraged me to “work on difficult problems,” but it was *meditation* that finally showed me the essence of this teaching.

Spirituality is often a derivative of suffering. Siddhartha realized this many years ago, and became Buddha. Swami Vivekananda saw great poverty. Sri Aurobindo had his paradigm shift in prison. No one can escape suffering, including myself.

I was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease that compromised my physical mobility. The only option presented by my doctors was life-long steroid injections and stress avoidance. I slipped into severe depression.

I tried to seek solace with sleeping pills and alcohol, but they only came with temporary relief (and permanent side effects). I was clearly going the wrong way... until I met my therapist.

I underwent hypnotherapy, followed by an intense regimen of meditation (including Kundalini meditation) to strengthen my psychological capabilities and well-being.

Over time, my orthopedic ailments became less prominent. My doctors discontinued the steroid injections. I became more mindful, steadfast, with better sleeping habits and increased physical fitness. Meditation not only elevated my

consciousness... it healed my body as well.

Alternative healing plays an important role in our society. It is simple, mostly non-invasive, and complementary to ongoing Medical Therapy with numerous psychological benefits published by many scientific studies. When the pandemic hit, I decided to share my learning with others, so that everyone can unlock their greatness and realize their actual

potential. This idea led to the birth of *Bleuauras* in 2021.

Bleuauras is a Health and Wellness hub that helps people lead joyful and peaceful lives. We provide consultations using methods like Meditation, Reiki Healing etc, to mediate personal growth in all spheres of life. Our energy healing methods are highly customized, as not everyone fits “the mold.” We aim to partner with experts from many spiritual

traditions, medical professionals, and scientists, to foster healthy life, education and awareness.

Our weekly YouTube videos attract thousands of viewers and have gathered 300+ subscribers in less than 30 days! We hope to build the Bleuauras community together, and make the world a happy place. ●

VISIT BLEUAURAS.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION, AND TO WATCH FREE MEDITATION AND REIKI LESSONS FROM ABHISHEK, CHECK OUT THE BLEUAURAS YOUTUBE BY SCANNING THIS QR CODE!



Abhishek Ghosh is the Founder at Bleuauras, a Health and Wellness hub helping people to unlock their greatness.

He is an Energy Healing Consultant, Certified Reiki therapist, and a Meditation Coach completing over 10,000 hours of meditation. He is a Former Scientist with a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Abhishek experienced a major shift in his consciousness which altered his philosophy of life. He takes interest in various ancient traditions and esoteric wisdom with emphasis on mind and body.

THE 4 CORNERSTONES OF TRUE WELLNESS

Health and wellness are about more than just your body & mind. In this article, celebrity wellness expert & nutritionist Kimberly Snyder explains her “4 cornerstones” of true holistic health & wellness.

Words by Kimberly Snyder



What is wellness, and how does it benefit us? The answer is actually pretty simple. Wellness is what you get when you properly nourish your mind, body, and soul, leading to better overall health, vitality, increased self-awareness, and a better outlook on life. Wellness is ultimately a daily experience of wholeness. Though it’s not hard to do, cultivating wellness takes a certain amount of time and commitment in a few different areas of your life.

In over a decade of working in wellness, I’ve found that we’re not well if we focus just on one area of our life. For many of us, our wellness journeys may start with food. Our daily diet is an integral part of feeling good and experiencing wholeness. But if we lose a few pounds while neglecting our minds and spirits, something is going to feel off. Maybe we eat well, but lack peace, or are anxious, or suffer from insomnia. Perhaps we don’t feel happy or confident, or we are easily influenced or disturbed by someone’s opinion of us. These physical, mental, and spiritual challenges often lead us to fall off the wagon. The result? We lose any gains we may have achieved through diet or exercise, which makes us feel off all over again.

No one wants to feel bad, so this is why it’s critical to take a holistic approach to wellness, one that honors and nurtures all aspects of who we are. We are multilayered beings, and everything inside and outside of us is connected. If you’re anxious, it can affect your sleep, which affects your self-esteem, which in turn affects your anxiety levels, and well...you get the picture! When we treat the many parts of ourselves as separate--for example, when we ignore that our mental outlook influences our bodies--we get fractured results.

Moving toward wholeness through the Four Cornerstones of Wellness is central to my work: Food, Body, Emotional Well-Being, and Spiritual Growth. When you follow this holistic approach to wellness, you will experience confidence, clarity of mind, centeredness, and increased energy.

By making the Four Cornerstones part of your life, you regain balance and start to thrive. It is critical to pay attention to all four. As I mentioned earlier, there is an intricate connection between mind, body, and soul. If you ignore one part of who you are, you weaken your foundation, and as everyone knows, a house with a weakened foundation can lean to one side and eventually collapse.

On the more positive flip-side, when you focus on each cornerstone, you’ll see how one affects the other. For instance, maybe you want to lose weight. You will, of course, want to focus on the foods you eat and the way you move your body. Beyond that, if you pay attention to how you process and digest your emotions and give yourself time to practice meditation, you’ll experience clarity of mind and soul. This lucidity leads to better decisions about food and inspires you to go on that extra walk in the evening, which helps you to sleep better, and supports your healthy weight.

Without further ado, here is some information on each Cornerstone and some tips to help you get started on your holistic path to wellness today!



FOOD

We need to nourish our bodies with the right foods. What we eat and drink affects our energy, moods, and overall health on a cellular level, so choose your foods wisely.

TIPS

- Instead of simply reducing food down to numbers (calories, grams of sugar or protein, and so on), focus on eating foods as close to their whole, natural state as possible.
- Eat a plant-forward diet, as fiber is only found in plant foods. Fiber helps nourish the lining of your gut, creating better immunity, moods, and less

inflammation in your body.

- Master two to three easy dishes where you can mix and match the veggies and spices that feel good to you that day or season. Keeping things simple is not only easier on your digestion, but it also reduces the stress many of us feel around “what am I going to eat today?”, helping you stay more focused and centered.

BODY

We must take care of our bodies, inside and out. They are temples, meaning they are sacred and should be treated with respect. Our bodies have so much wisdom to offer us, so pay attention to them. If you have pain in any part of your body, it’s your body telling you something needs to be addressed. Tight shoulders might result from pent up stress, bad sleeping habits, or emotional build up. Our bodies need daily nurturing.

TIPS

- Take SBO Probiotics daily to maintain excellent gut health. Gut health is the key to great immunity, energy, great skin, digestion, and more. Soil-based

organisms (SBOs) are how our ancestors used to get their probiotics naturally, from ingesting unwashed fruits and vegetables. You can check out the SBO probiotics we offer at mySolluna.com.

- Take a walk in nature. Walking is one of the best natural forms of exercise. It is non-jarring and increases circulation throughout the body, including the brain. When we are in nature, it helps align us to the natural rhythms, so we feel calmer and more centered. Walking is also an excellent way to de-stress at the end of your day, so consider taking an evening stroll after dinner!
- Practice abhyanga or self-massage. Working with your skin is an excellent way to help soothe your nervous system, which in turn affects your endocrine system and immune system. Warm a small amount of coconut or sesame oil, and massage it into your skin using long strokes up to your heart. Also, massage a small amount to your scalp and the bottoms of your feet. Finish with a warm shower. →

PHOTOGRAPHY: PEXELS KOOL SHOOTERS, PIXABAY



EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

This is often a big missing piece of our wellness journey. Emotions are energy in motion. These energies flow through us, whether they are the ones we label as “bad,” like anger, or “good,” like happiness. When we have residue emotions that haven’t been addressed, they can trigger some bad behavior. These outbursts or inbursts (when we rage inside) lead to ongoing relationship drama, guilt, shame, chronic anger, resentment, volatility, anxiousness, or depression. When we work on allowing our emotions to flow, everything around us gets better. Our outer world is in large part a reflection of our inner energy, since everything is energy, and we are creating all the time with energy, whether we realize it or not.

TIPS

- Learn to distinguish the difference between thoughts and emotions. Thoughts are what you think about something, emotions are feelings. We often muck up the waters by attaching thoughts to what we are experiencing. Instead of justifying, try feeling the actual sensations in your body as they rise--and eventually, fall.
- Emotions do recede! Stay with your feelings to let them pass through you like a wave. This takes patience and practice, but once the big feelings pass, then it’s better to act or speak from that regulated place.
- Find a safe, trusted community or therapist with which you can process your emotions and work to get to the root of some deep wounds.
- Journal every day for at least 5-10 minutes to allow for some space for processing emotions. Good questions to ask yourself include: What did I learn today? What can I let go of? What am I grateful for?



PHOTOGRAPHY: PEXELS, KAROLINA GRABOWSKA, UEAB, FREEPIK

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

This cornerstone is all about creating more self-awareness, more connection to who we really are. We are more than what we look like and what we do. A higher intelligence flows through us and all things--call it Source, Spirit, the Universe, God, whatever term you prefer. When we connect to that energy within us, we are connecting to our True Self. Our True Self is our real identity and takes us past the trappings of over-identifying with the ego, which is constantly worried about survival. It is over-identifying with the ego that slips us into feeling not enough or competitive with our Sisters and Brothers. As we connect with our True Selves more and more, we experience the truth of Oneness- that we are all unique and yet connected and here to enhance, love and support each other. We need not be scared. We can tap into real security from within.

TIPS

- The most powerful way to connect to the True Self is through meditation. Try seeking a method that resonates with you and stick with it. Bouncing around from technique to technique, can prevent you from going deeper into the practice. I highly recommend following the “superhighway” path of the great yoga guru Paramahansa Yogananda. He taught Kriya Yoga as the peak way to achieve self-realization. I offer simple practices inspired by Yogananda’s teachings, called Practical Enlightenment Meditation, on my website.
- Consciously create more stillness in your life by balancing screen time and all the many activities you engage in with periods of introspection and meditation. No one will give us more time in our lives, so it’s vital we carve out moments for ourselves!
- Make meditation an essential part of your mornings and evenings. It can take some time to experience the full benefits of meditation--reduced stress, lower heart rate, joy--but if you practice a few minutes early and late in the day, you’ll start to see some changes to your mental, spiritual, and physical health rather quickly.

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A circular inset image showing a green mug of golden tea, a small blue bowl of colorful snacks, and a pink box of 'Heart Chakra' tea. The box has a green chakra diagram on it.

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ADVENTURES

The journey of meditation

6 Ways Traveling Improves Your Emotional Health

Kelly Smith, Founder
of *Yoga For You* and
Host of *The Mindful
in Minutes Podcast*,
shares six deep
insights about how
traveling can improve
your spiritual &
emotional wellbeing.

PHOTOGRAPHY: KATE CRAIG

For nearly two years, we as a society have been yearning for the chance to travel again. After months of being stuck inside, working from home, and only connecting with people as small boxes on our computer screen, we've been depleted from the emotional and spiritual nourishment that comes from travel and adventure. I personally have felt this pull for the last 18 months after being grounded as a traveling yoga and meditation teacher, putting all retreats, trainings, and international events on pause while I stay home and my passport collects dust in a drawer.

However, this is all beginning to change. Now that travel restrictions are lifting, we can begin cautiously dipping our toes back into exploration and adventure. While we may initially think of travel as a fun or restful thing to do, it is important not to forget the impact it can have on our emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Travel can replenish your spirit by helping you seek new scenery, perspective, and build deeper connections with other humans and yourself. As you're planning your next journey, consider these 6 ways that travel improves your emotional health and may be exactly what you need to uplift and soothe your soul in 2022.

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDI B PHOTOGRAPHY (LEFT), ROXY PHOTOS (RIGHT)



1

Boost your happiness and decrease your stress.

Nothing is better for your emotional wellbeing than decreasing your stress and increasing your happiness. A recent study suggests that those who travel often report higher levels of life satisfaction, and are less likely to be diagnosed with depression. Travel also gives you the chance to step away from the day to day stressors of life, and be present in the moment as you take in new experiences and surroundings giving you a break from the daily grind of life. →



2

Breathe a breath of fresh air. Literally.

We all know how good it feels to step outside and take a deep breath of fresh air. Regardless of if you're exploring a new city, taking a mountain vacation or a sea-side getaway, when you are on a trip, you are more likely to explore, walk around, see the sights and take in fresh air and sunlight. Going outside and moving your body has been linked to decreased stress, and mental fatigue as well as improved mood and cognitive function and overall happiness. →

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDI B PHOTOGRAPHY





3

Connect with someone and something new.

One of the main reasons I hear a student choose to go on a meditation or yoga retreat with me is because they wanted to meet and connect with more like minded people, and share this once in a lifetime experience with others. Nothing helps you build stronger connections and friendships than travel. Sharing an adventure like an international yoga and meditation retreat can bring together new friends who share a love and passion for travel, yoga, and meditation. →



PHOTO (R): PEXELS JOSE ARAGONES

PHOTOGRAPHY: KELLY SMITH



4

Find a new perspective, and turn inward.

Nothing expands your mind and heart more than seeing a new culture and interacting with people who have had different life experiences than you. Traveling gives you the opportunity to find a new perspective on life and challenges you to turn inward and reflect on what is truly important to you and see the world through a different lens. It is nearly impossible to come home from a trip as the same person you were when you left. →

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROXY PHOTOS



5

Step outside of your comfort zone and grow.

Stepping out of your comfort zone and doing something like traveling to a new place will challenge you to grow in ways you never could have imagined, and build your self-confidence. Exploring a new city, trying a local dish, or even trying to pick up on a new language can help you boost your confidence and strengthen your ability to adapt and navigate the unknown. →

PHOTO (L): PEXELS, JESS LOITERTON, ROXY PHOTOS, (R) ANDY B PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTOGRAPHY ANDY B PHOTOGRAPHY (LEFT), ROXY PHOTOS (RIGHT)

6

Slow down, be present, and truly feel.

Perhaps one of the greatest ways in which travel improves your emotional health is by forcing you to slow down, be present, and really truly live in your surroundings. Just like meditation, experiencing a new place brings you in tune with your senses, appreciating all that is around you, and grounding you in the present moment. Fully feeling the space you are in, being present with yourself, and living is one of the best things you can do for your emotional health and wellbeing. ●

FOR MORE BEAUTIFUL WISDOM FROM KELLY, CHECK OUT THE MINDFUL IN MINUTES PODCAST AND YOGAFORYOUONLINE.COM!



THE YIN AND YANG OF HOLISTIC HEALTH

BY KEVIN ELLERTON

Growing up in New York, my friends and I absorbed what has come to be known as “bro culture.”

We mocked, yelled at, and insulted each other, to motivate each other to be “better” versions of ourselves. We pushed each other to lift more weights, face more fears, try new things, and get out of our comfort zones.

Phrases like “be all you can be,” “push your limits,” and “life begins at the end of your comfort zone” have permeated our culture to the point that it almost feels like they are unquestionable Truths of Existence.

Holding these core values pushes us forward, but they can often get in the way of our ability to enjoy the fruits of our efforts, or appreciate the beauty of just being alive in the present moment.

As I curated the articles in this issue, I began to realize that many people (often spiritual women like my wife Jovanna) are subjected to a different kind of mind-stream: “love your body,” “you are perfect as you are.”

To be honest, I felt uncomfortable with these ideas at first. I wondered if it was a healthy way of thinking. It went completely against the grain of my bro-culture upbringing. If you’re perfect as

you are, how will you have the motivation to push yourself harder, to leave your cozy comfort zone?

As Jovanna and I worked through this HEALTH Issue, it dawned on me:

These two contradictory philosophies of life are simply two sides of the same Taijitu. The “yang” pushes us to work harder, do more, and get out of our comfort zones. The “yin” comforts us, to rest, relax, and enjoy our lives.

If we only focus on one side, the yin or the yang, our lives become unbalanced. To live a truly balanced, holistically healthy life, we must embrace both the yin and the yang.

To read more on this topic, scan the QR code below!



YIN YANG BY BRIZBAZAAR

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