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MEDITATION

THE **EARTH** ISSUE

GAIA THEORY PLANT SPIRITS AND MORE!

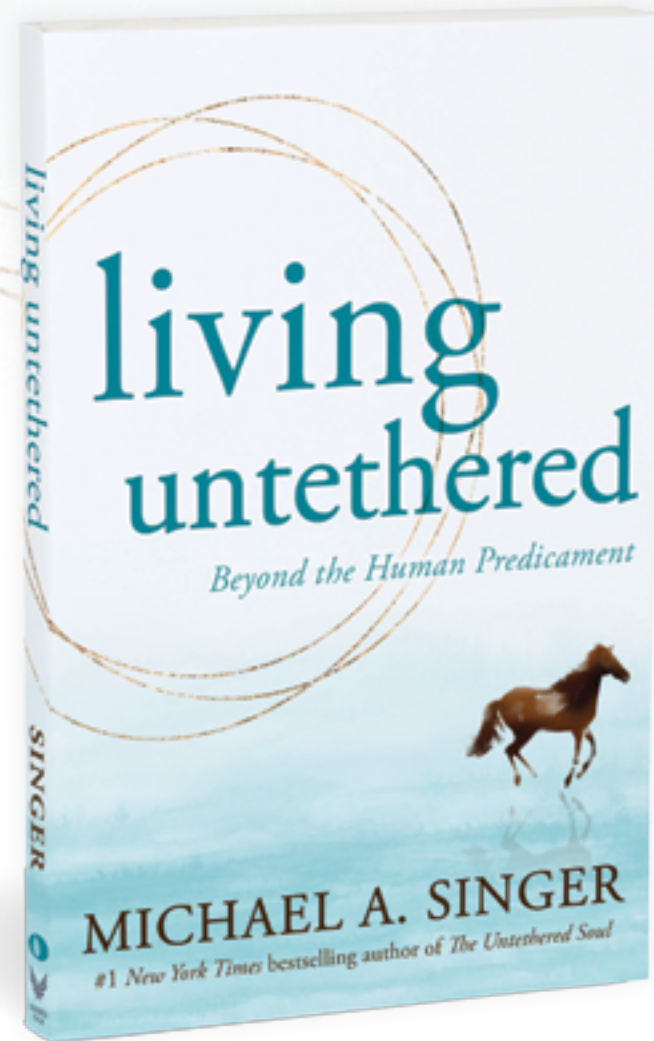
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The Earth Issue

INTRO

4

Editor's Letter

MEDITATIONS

7

5 Grounding meditations

18

Featured Asana:
Sirsasana

SOUL FOOD

23

Zero-Waste Food

26

Blend into Nature

KINDRED SPIRITS

29

Dancing To The Heartbeat of Mother Earth

32

Eco Tribe

44

Do Plants Have Spirits That Communicate with Us?



52

Witches, Pagans & Heathens, Oh My!

55

Plant-Based Electric Motorcycles, Made Of Algae And Cactus?

58

The Earth Interview: Swami Mukundananda

WRITINGS

62

Shifting Our Cultural Mindset From Colonialism to Connectedness

66

Communicating With Animals

68

The Earth Peoples

72

The Magic of Deep Nature Connection

78

Collective Chaos To Collective Consciousness: Anxiety Freedom Technique

80

Encountering Nature With Brad Wanik

84

Elephant Corner

ADVENTURES

90

Surfing The Skies

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MEDITATION

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ON THE COVER

Planet Earth.

You are in this photo. Along with everyone you have ever known.

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Editor's Letter

I looked around at the stark blue sky and blazing white peaks, cold wind howling around my ears. My sister Tamar, literally blue in the face, crawled on the ground, inching her way toward the summit. Our oxygen bottle had run out a few hundred feet below; we could only take a few steps at a time before we had to lie down to catch our breath.

As we climbed, I often wondered: Why are we doing this to ourselves? Are we crazy?

But standing on the peak of Mount Elbert, gazing down upon the snow-capped summits of an unfathomably massive mountain range, I knew exactly why we were here. No words were needed to explain this revelation. It was an emotional and spiritual experience.

Now, as I sit here in meditative contemplation, pondering what *Letter From The Editor* I could write that could possibly do justice to *The Earth Issue* of Meditation Magazine... I close my eyes, and feel my body sitting upon the couch, upon the Earth, and I understand what that crazy mountaintop revelation was all about.

Meditation Magazine is still struggling to navigate the stormy waters in this tumultuous economic sea. I've written, in past issues, about my personal experiences dealing with the stress and anxiety from this situation. But as I work on The Earth Issue, poring over our interviews with Earth activists, ecologists, and artists... something inside of me feels... somehow, more at peace.



It's not that I'm unaware of the problems that need to be solved. I am keenly aware (sometimes too keenly) of the things that need to get done, and of the massive logistical puzzles that still need to get figured out. But simply by reading through our interviews about Being Nature, looking at the shamanic art, and the epic Planet Earth cover, I am in touch with something greater than myself. I am marinating in awe. I am meditating with Mother Earth.

This feeling of calm and comfort that arises from connecting with something greater than myself – this is fundamentally the same emotion that I felt as I stood, that bright cold morning, gazing down upon the western US. It's the same thing I felt when driving through the vast canyonlands of Utah and Arizona, and watching the sunset over the ocean, from the top of a mountain on an island in the Andaman sea.



It's also the same thing I felt a few minutes ago, when I sat down on my couch (which sits on the floor, which sits on concrete, which sits on dirt...), closed my eyes, and felt my body's physical connection to Planet Earth.

That feeling of connecting with something greater is not just some weird thing that I like to do, or something that requires thousands of dollars of mountaineering equipment.

That feeling of calm, comfort, strength, and stability that arises from connecting with something greater than ourselves is literally at the foundation of all the religions and spiritual traditions around the world.

Whether we're contemplating God, or Gaia, or Brahman, or The Infinite Void, we expand our consciousness to encompass something so much larger than ourselves that it makes our mundane problems and emotions seem much more manageable by comparison.

All meditative traditions, at their core, are ways of realizing that Oneness (through "yoga," "Brahman," "atman" and "anatta," "the Dao," etc)... realizing that we are actually something greater, more stable, and more durable than our fleeting, mortal, human bodies.

At Wat Suan Mokkh in Thailand, one of the monks told me that all our fears boil down to that deepest, most ultimate fear: death, dissolution, non-existence. That deep unease, discomfort, or "Dukkha," that lurks

beneath the surface of our everyday consciousness, is actually arising from the knowledge that our human bodies will someday cease to be. If this is indeed our deepest fear, and our deepest sorrow, then it is easy to see how connecting, and identifying, with something greater (like God, Brahman, The Universe, or Mother Earth) can bring comfort, solace, and refuge from fear, sorrow, overwhelm and anxiety.

Some people experience this sense of connection through prayer. Others find it through meditation. Some, like my sister Tamar, find it by listening to a forest stream, looking up through the swaying boughs at the clouds above, and realizing that we are all One Planet: Earth.

That is what this issue is about: realizing our fundamental Oneness with Mother Earth. As Eliane Cohen (page 38) calls it: Being Nature.

You, and I, and all life on Earth, grew out of Planet Earth. Deeper: humans are not just things that grow upon the Earth... we are the Earth! Just as much as any mountain range, or forest, or hurricane, we are Planet Earth. We are all processes of the same biosphere – cells in the body of Gaia, The Living Planet, Mother Earth herself.

We hope you enjoy this EARTH ISSUE of Meditation Magazine. It is truly a 100-page meditation on Planet Earth. May it put your life in perspective, as it has mine.

“That feeling that arises from connecting with something greater than ourselves... is at the foundation of all religions and spiritual traditions around the world.”

Announcements!

Bringing this Letter From The Editor back to Earth for a moment, I have a few mundane announcements to make.

1. We are in discussions with Elephant Journal to (possibly) create a partnership between our companies, to work together, share resources, and increase our collective impact in this world. You can find a little more about this potential partnership on page 84 ... we'd love to hear your thoughts! Please feel free to write to hello@meditationmag.com

2. The conversations we've had while developing this Earth Issue have inspired us to put more of our resources into making this

magazine more and more "green" over time; planting more trees, using more eco-friendly materials, and more. This will increase the cost to produce the magazine, and so we will likely need to raise our retail & subscription prices. But don't worry: all of our subscribers are grandfathered in at the prices that they sign up for. So if you are already a subscriber (or if you subscribe today), these future price increases will not affect you at all.

3. We are very excited about the trajectory of our 2022 issues!

Spring '22 was the "Health" Issue, which focused on the individual human body, mind & spirit. Summer '22 is the "Earth" Issue, which expands the sense of self to Planet Earth, our neighbors, our global civilization, our plant and animal cousins, and the ecosphere as a whole. Autumn '22 will be the "Universe" Issue, further expanding our consciousness into the epic Oneness of Existence. And what could be larger than The Universe, for the Winter 2022 Issue? Well... you'll have to wait and see ❤️



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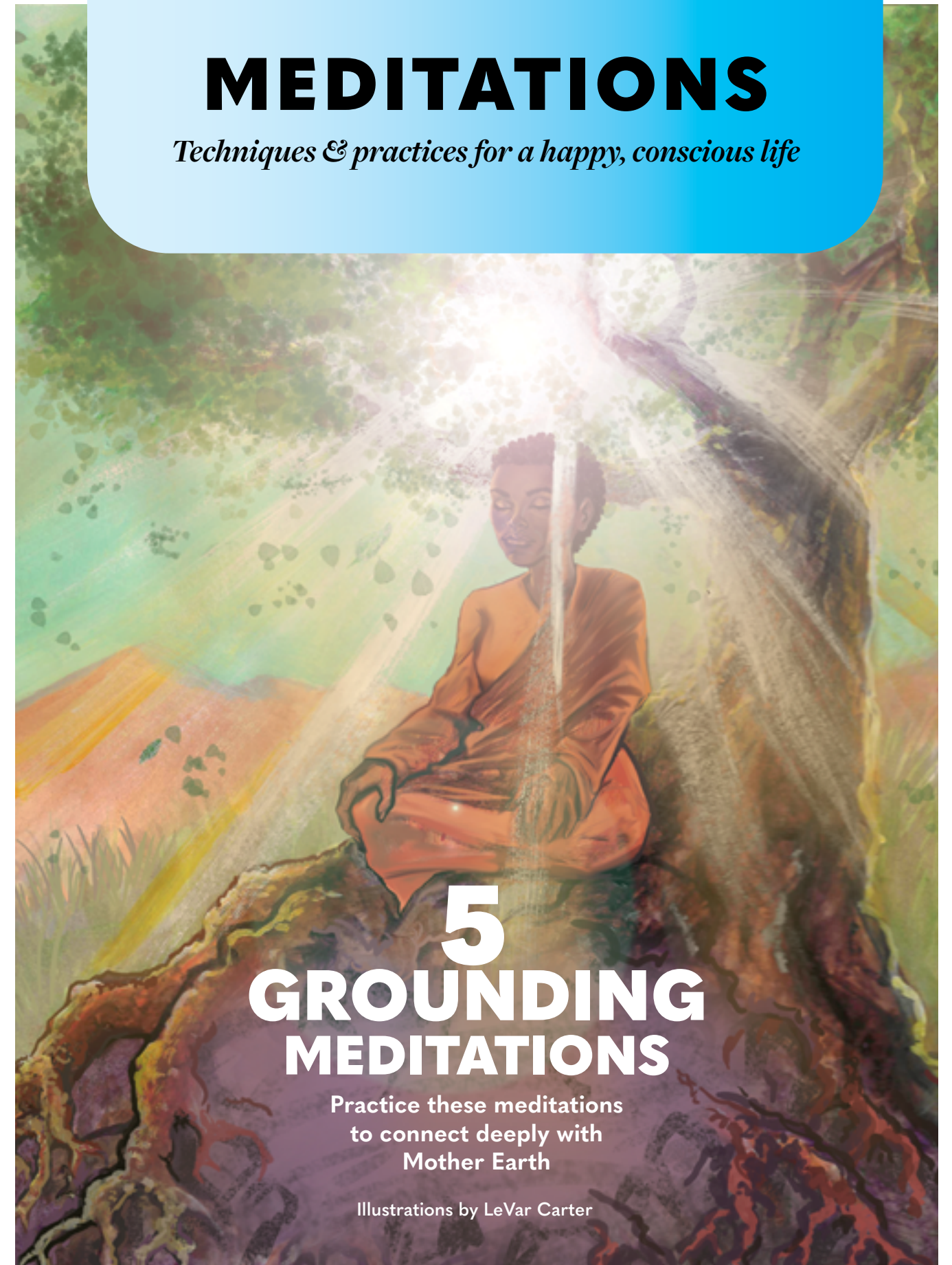
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MEDITATIONS

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5 GROUNDING MEDITATIONS

Practice these meditations
to connect deeply with
Mother Earth

Illustrations by LeVar Carter

Illustrator profile



LeVar Carter

LeVar Carter is an artist, gardener, yogi, and educator based out of central Virginia. He enjoys spending time in nature, and his favorite meditation is a tie between the Mahamrityunjaya mantra and the Sodarshan Chakra Kriya. He is available for commissions and consultation; follow his activities at blissisuponyou.com or @blissisuponyou on Facebook and/or Instagram.



EARTH CHAKRAS

with **Danielle Golden**

Let the energy of the Earth flow through your chakras, in this kundalini-inspired meditation.

First, make sure you're in a comfortable seat.

Now take a nice deep breath: counting to four on the inhale, suspend the breath for four, and exhale for four through the mouth.

Now let's do that two more times, and then find your relaxed natural rhythm with your breath.

Now repeat, either aloud or internally,

"I am loved"

"I am held"

"I am in alignment with my highest self"

Wonderful! Now, envision a white light coming through the crown of your head, slowly making its way all the way down through your body to the tips of your toes.

Once you reach your toes, I want you to imagine roots growing from the bottoms of your feet. Take time imagining the roots. Are they thick? Are there a lot of them, or only a few? Reaching down through the floor, through the grass and dirt, feeling along the rocks, until you get into the Earth's core.

Seeing the ball of molten rock, wrap your roots around the core and let that warmth radiate through your body. Sit with this warm feeling for a few moments.

Now, let's bring that warmth up through your roots to your feet, up your calves, and thighs until it reaches your root chakra, at the base of your spine.

Moving slowly and intentionally, I want you to imagine your root chakra as a red light, spinning clockwise, and getting brighter.

Now bring that warmth up into your sacral chakra, and imagine a bright orange light, spinning clockwise.

And pull that warmth up into your solar plexus chakra; a yellow light spinning clockwise right above your belly button.

Pulling it even further up to your heart chakra, a green light... and up into your throat chakra, which is a beautiful blue... to your third eye, right in the space between your eyebrows and slightly elevated is a beautiful indigo chakra... and finally up to your crown chakra, which is a lovely lavender color.

Now imagine that white light again, starting at the crown, and enveloping your entire body in a cocoon of light, sealing in your intention and love.

Take a deep breath, feeling your diaphragm expand and fill with life force energy.

Slowly bring your awareness back into your body, gently moving your fingers and toes, then your hands and feet, opening your eyes when you feel ready. ●

2

EARTH FULL MEDITATION with Ellae Elinwood

Becoming an antenna between Earth and Universe

Meditation as a discipline was developed thousands of years ago, when the Earth was a very different place. Our planet was largely a vast, untouched, natural world with only a few million people across the entire globe. People led their lives so closely connected to the Earth's rhythms that it was inconceivable that one might try to ignore her powerful presence.

Although meditation has been around for such a long time, it has been called a gift to modern humanity. Meditation's ancient techniques have proven to be of tremendous value in improving wellness in many areas of life. Some of its benefits include: reduced stress, easier respiration, more reliable daily energy, balanced metabolism, better emotional balance, improved cardiovascular health, better circulation, sharper focus, increased compassion, interest in common and uncommon ground, the desire to nurture and understand, balanced moods, spiritual development, and even Enlightenment.

The third state of awareness

We are very familiar with the first two states of awareness... awake and asleep. Meditation, the third state of awareness, was first developed around five thousand years ago. At that time, the natural world was strong, meaning that the variety of life was balanced, evolving, and burgeoning. Earth, her nature, and her life-balancing resonances permeated all life, including humans. This is what is called the third state of awareness.

The magnetic flows of Earth, known now as the Schumann Pulse, are scientifically measurable magnetic flows, which were balanced and unimpeded by the impact of the ancient humans. Humans' body cellular memory is attuned to this timeless, steady,

rhythmic pulsing movement that energetically joins the Earth to the Universe. It is not hard to imagine prehistoric meditators living immersed within this rhythm; it was just part of the flow of life. Indigenous people the world over still show us this deep connection to the Earth's dynamics, beating drums to the resonances and rhythms, and dancing to feel the Earth's pulsations through their lower bodies.

Meditation was created from the human need to know more: to explore and expand into undiscovered realms, and to develop an Earth-based technology specifically designed to expand consciousness, wisdom, and knowledge. Early meditators used what was available to them: Earth, themselves and the Universe. Incorporating the flows of Earth and the Universe into their legs, feet, and pelvis was not necessary; the cellular resonance was already there. It was part of their inner life.

This is probably why little attention is paid to the hips, pelvis, and legs when practicing meditation now. It is a discipline of the torso that aligns the Earth's energies with the Universe's coalescing energies, and finally with the torso's chakras to achieve Enlightenment.

Enlightenment

Enlightenment is a personal living radiance and a clear resonance between Earth and the Universe.

One goal of meditation among the ancients was to achieve Enlightenment: to become a beautifully functioning antenna between Earth and the Universe. Connecting to both the Earth and the Universe is essential to attaining true balance, so that the balance can then be reflected back to others. That ancient balance that is Enlightenment within one's own body is still accessible to everyone now. →





How can we get back to a truly connective meditation practice?

The first problem to solve is how to become an antenna that can facilitate meditation. This is difficult even for those who have a spiritually attuned lifestyle because we don't live in a culture that has any reasonable connection to the energetic, lifting, clearing, and balancing flows of Earth. Our culture and way of life make virtually no attempt to engage with this resonance, thus there is no real understanding of its tremendous benefits for humans.

Even our personal lifestyle does not include Earth. Her flows as a constant part of our life are ignored, which means we have not fully incorporated the gift of the ancients, which is to be a harmonizer between Earth and the Universe. We have yet to activate the peaceful, balancing, vivifying, and energizing resonance that is our primary connection to Earth. Our genetic memories tell our bodies that we can become one with Earth's ability to rebalance and return us to inner peace. Forest bathing (the practice

encourages people to simply spend time in nature — no actual bathing required), for example, is a way to start remembering how to include Earth's presence and energy.

We are two forms of life: a soul, and a body. It is the body that carries the exquisite energetic, dynamic, personal, and deeply dependent relationship to Earth and her energies. As a soul we benefit enormously from living the reality of our body's gift to us. But in our modern world we need to consciously reinstate techniques to return to this great gift. You can create a meditation practice that harmonizes you with your Earthly life and your spiritual longing: this is an "Earth Full Mediation."

This embodied state is not new. We were all born embodied. We were embodied in early childhood. We have simply become distracted by a powerful mental world that has not yet found a balance with a powerful Earth alliance. Since our culture and lifestyle don't move us back to our natural embodied state, we are given the task of doing it ourselves.

How to enter Earth Full Meditation

Reopening (remember you were here as a child) to Earth's pulse is the first key to returning to your birthright. This is a state of inner balance that life's challenges cannot steal from you. It is the Schumann Resonance that permeates nature. It is why a walk outside is calming. It is why forest bathing is so richly renewing. The Resonance keeps everything aligned, and has been called Earth's heartbeat, Earth's breathing, Earth's sensuality. Our focus through meditation is to align our bodies with this pulse and to regain a "Mind Full" return to natural balance.

Meditation steps

The first step of bringing yourself fully inside your body to connect with Earth and the Universe is essential, and it may take some practice.

1. To begin your meditation, release into a downward feeling. Exhale, release, and let the gentle draw of gravity pull you down. Release to the Earth's beckoning.
2. Now start to meditate deep within your body.
3. You are receiving the Light and it naturally incorporates into the cells of your body.
4. Move your awareness to a particular part of your body, such as your heart.
5. Relax and let the Breath breathe you.
6. You are now weaving the guidance from your meditation into the cells of your body and deepening a harmonious relationship between your body and soul.
7. At the end of your meditation, settle downward into your hips and legs. Your spine may feel alive and warm.
8. Earth energies are a grounded resonance within you. Universal energies enter and disperse.

You are an antenna.

As you improve your practice you will find yourself feeling balanced, with Earth as the ground and your generous source of everything. Light is the powerful source that enters you with its own great wisdom. Don't reach for it. Receive it. Let it go where it goes. Light is much wiser than you.

As you incorporate Earth Full Meditation into your life, you will feel the downward gentle draw of Earth more and more. With each meditation your capacity to live in your body's connection expands. Earth's peaceful, stabilizing, rebalancing, and health-producing capacity lives with greater familiarity in your body and soul. ●



CLOUD 9 MEDITATION

with Pollyanna Easterbrook

This meditation is best experienced in a lying down position. Take a moment to get yourself comfortable. Make any last adjustments so you won't have to move throughout this guided meditation. Be still...and be comfortable.

If you are indoors, close your eyes and imagine you are outside in a place where you feel comfortable and calm. Imagine a beautiful sky with perfect looking clouds, so pretty you feel the urge to reach out and touch them, but you don't move. Just witness the beauty.

If you are outdoors, begin by gazing up at the sky and observing the world above you. Study the clouds, their size, shape, texture, and movement. When you are ready, close your eyes and hold the image of the sky in your mind's eye.

As you lie there in your beautiful and comfortable surroundings, allow your breath to flow through your nose and fill your lungs with fresh, cool, perfect air. And then allow your body to fully release the air back into the world. Hear all the sounds around you and allow them all to blend peacefully into the background. Intentionally turn their volume down in your mind and let them be soothing to hear.

Breathe in and appreciate the smell of the fresh air and its inspiring scent. Breathe out and let the air calm your wandering mind.

Feel your body completely supported by the strong, stable Earth beneath you. Feel the stability that the Earth provides you.

Inhale and feel the air gently touch your skin. Exhale and allow the Earth to take on all your burdens you don't wish to carry.

Inhale more fresh air into your body. Exhale and feel the Earth become stronger as it does what it is meant to do, support the life on its surface.

Inhale... Exhale... Inhale and notice the parts of your body that touch the ground: Your back, your arms →

and legs, the back of your head, the heels of your feet... Exhale and let them become heavy, as they sink deeper into the Earth.

Inhale and notice the parts of your body that can feel the air: Your toes, your knees, belly and chest, your face...

Exhale and allow your body to feel light as you flow with your breath.

Breathe in and bring your awareness to your toes, the bottoms of your feet and the tops of your feet.

Breathe out and let them relax.

Breathe in and move your awareness up to your shins and calf muscles, your knees, thighs and hamstrings.

Breathe out and let them relax. Breathe in and notice your belly and chest rise and fill with air. Breathe all the air out and let them sink down towards the Earth.

Take another breath in and feel your back and your head rest comfortably on the ground.

Breathe out all the air and feel your entire body relax. Feel your body becoming warmer and more comfortable from the inside out.

Feel as if your heart is spreading its loving warmth throughout your body like the sun and feel happiness radiate from you.

As you continue to breathe in...and breathe out... let go of the rest of your stress onto the strong Earth beneath you.

Feel how much lighter you are as you let go of what is holding you down.

Feel your happiness and joy lift you upwards towards the sky.

With every cycle of breath, you become more like the

clouds in the sky, light and peaceful.

Rise up high above the Earth.

Breathe in and feel love and happiness. Breathe out and let go of every last bit of weight that is still trying to pull you back towards the ground below.

With your mind's eye, move freely through the sky, just as a cloud or even a bird would do.

Feel the freedom to explore the world. See the mountains, the valleys, the oceans, the deserts, the forests, the wildlife, the villages, the cities, and all the other sights you want to see. See them clearly. Feel the joy. Breathe in the fresh air high above the Earth. Breathe out and continue to soar. Soar for as long as you need.

As you become fulfilled by the world around you, start to journey back to that spot on the Earth where you left all your burdens. Pass by all the same sights again. Go back and see all the cities, the villages, the forests, the wildlife, the deserts, the oceans, the valleys, and the mountains. Thank them for their beauty and for being a part of your journey, and continue to move on.

When you lie your mind and body back down where you began, remember how strong the Earth is and how there is no need to take on those burdens again. You do not need them. They are not you. They hold you down when you are not meant to be held down. You are free, free to be happy, free to be loved, free to be you.

Feel your breath move in and out of your relaxed body and feel gratitude for the power inside you. The power that moves you through the world with ease.

Only when you are ready, gradually move your fingers and gradually move your toes and slowly move your head from side to side.

Open your eyes and take this feeling with you wherever you go. ●



4



ROSE QUARTZ CRYSTAL MEDITATION

with Hailey Meadow

In Kevin's Insta-live with Hailey Meadow, Kevin noticed that Hailey was holding a large chunk of rose quartz. Kevin asked Hailey to lead an impromptu meditation, flowing with the energy of the crystal, and The Earth from which it came. Here is that meditation!

Find a comfortable spot to sit or lie down. If you're sitting, feel your sit bones, or if you're lying down, feel your whole body, connecting to Mother Earth.

Start with a nice, deep breath... as deep as you can go into your belly.

Hold for one, two, three, and just sigh it out. Make a sound... let the energy move.

Now take another nice deep breath in... and sigh it out. One more, breathe in... and out. Return to your normal breath.

Feel how you're supported by Mother Earth, by Mother Gaia. She's always here to support you. How does that feel?

You can bring your hands up to your heart, and feel your heartbeat. Feeling your heartbeat means you still have meaning and purpose. You have a very special mission here. Feel into that heartbeat. Let yourself feel the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Visualize your heart's beautiful pink energy, its bubble of glitter, rosy-colored pink.

As you breathe in, feel that pink energy expand out of your heart, and grow bigger and bigger with each breath.

And with each exhale, you're picking up anything lingering in the shadows of your heart space, anything that you've shut in the corners, and breathing it out. It's no longer serving you. Let it go.

Continue this process until you have a huge pink bubble all around you, and you're surrounded in pure love. Take big breaths as you bask in the pure love energy. You are so loved, so supported.

Feel the resonance of love, and Mother Earth, through your body. Let go of anything that no longer serves.

One more deep breath in, blow it out, wiggle your toes, wiggle your fingers, and when you're ready, come back! ●



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5

CONNECTING MOTHER EARTH & FATHER SKY

with Paula Woodrum

Nighttime version

Focus on your breathing by taking deep, cleansing breaths.
With every breath, you relax a little more,
The cares of the day draining harmlessly into the Earth.

Imagine yourself outside at nighttime.
You hear the wind rustling the leaves in the trees above you.
Now look up to Father Sky, brilliant stars shining above you.
There is one star that shines brighter than the rest.
That is Father Sky. Open yourself to him.
There is a singular beam of light coming from Father Sky.
That beam of light enters your body through the top of your head,
And it goes down your back, down your torso,
Filling you as it goes down your arms to your fingertips,
Past your hips, through your legs, the ground beneath you,
Into Mother Earth.

You are filled with divine, white light from Father Sky.
Imagine that white light going down through the surface of the Earth
To meet with Mother Earth herself, down through the soil
Down through rock, through bedrock, through crystal and cavern,
Until that brilliant white light reaches the core of the Earth.

Mother Earth senses you and sends back cool, green energy,
Back up, from the core of the earth, through crystal and cavern,
Through bedrock and rock, up through the soil, into the soles of your
feet, up your legs, through your hips, into your torso,
Melding her cool, green energy with the energy of Father Sky.
Down your arms to your fingertips, up through your shoulders,
Your neck, and up and out through the top of your head,
Reaching out to Father Sky.

Your body is alive with energies of Mother Earth and Father Sky.
Connected within you, their energies now mingle and become
An ever-shifting sphere of energy in the center of your chest
A shifting yin-yang of Earth and Sky.

Their energies bring you comfort, strength, calm and love.
You are protected, you have no cares, and you have no fear.
The energies mingle until they become a brilliant, light-green light
And then they sink into your heart.

You know you can call upon these energies at any time
Anytime you feel the need for comfort, for strength and stability
Anytime you feel overwhelmed or feel anxieties
All your cares are gone whenever you call upon the energies
Of Mother Earth and Father Sky. ●

Daytime version

Focus on your breathing by taking deep, cleansing breaths
With every breath, you relax a little more
All your cares and tension draining away into the Earth.
You are in a state of complete relaxation and happiness.
You are receptive to what the world has open for you.

Now, imagine yourself outside in the morning.
You can feel the sun's warming rays on your face.
You see the green of the lush leaves on the trees.
And feel the lush grass beneath your feet.
You can feel the dew of the morning kiss your skin.
There is a gentle breeze blowing.
You can hear the leaves in the trees rustling
You feel nature all around you.

You look up to the sky, to Father Sky.
There is a singular ray of sunlight reaching out.
You open yourself to Father Sky.
That ray of sun beams down on you,
And fills you with golden sunlight
With divine love from Father Sky.

The divine light goes through your body
Down through your feet, and into Mother Earth.
You can feel and see that ray of light,
Reach down through the topsoil, through rock and loam,
Through bedrock and crystals and caverns,
Until it reaches the Earth's molten core,
That is the essence and power of Mother Earth.

Mother Earth sends her warm, green energy
Up through that column of light.
It comes back up through the layers of the Earth, into your feet.
This green Earth energy mixes with that of Father Sky,
The glowing green and gold energies
Of Mother Earth and Father Sky pulsate in your body
Until they form a shifting ball of yin-yang energy at your heart.
This ball of energy can be moved anywhere in your body,
Simply by a thought from you.
Move that ball of sky and earth energy
into your dominant hand.

You can feel it tingle as it moves
Down your arm into that hand.
Move the ball of energy back up that arm,
Back to your heart.

Now, move it down your other arm into your other hand.
Now, move it back up your arm and back up to your heart
Now, those ever-shifting energies become a singular ball
They dissipate and become one with you.

Those energies are there for you to call upon at any time
They keep you calm, they keep you centered
And they keep you One with the Universe. ●



Featured Asana SIRSASANA

Sirsasana is an advanced inversion where we bring our head below our heart and balance ourselves upside down. It connects us to the earth and grounds us in a somewhat unfamiliar, yet beautiful way

With Featured Yogi: Angie Tiwari
Photo by Duffy

Sirsasana is an inversion which ancient texts once referred to as the king of all asanas. It's an extremely effective pose for restoring balance, increasing blood supply to our brain, boosting immunity by stimulating our lymphatic system, and for building strength in our core, upper body and spine. While it has dramatically positive effects on our body, it is also amazing for building self-esteem and trust within ourselves.

How to practice

For Beginners

1. Start on all fours and step your feet back one by one to take you into plank pose.
2. From here, drop your forearms to the earth and focus on pushing the floor away with your forearms.
3. Slowly start walking your feet towards your face and keep your gaze towards your feet.
4. You can take a little bend in the knees if you need to, just work on lengthening through the backs of your legs and driving the energy from the heels towards the Earth
5. Hold here for 10 breaths and when you're ready drop the knees to the earth, and come into child's pose

For Advanced Practitioners

1. Begin kneeling on your mat in vajrasana (thunderbolt pose) and lay your forearms on the mat so you can create your base. You want to grab hold of each forearm, just above the elbow and then bring your hands together in an interlace so when you look down you see a triangular shape. This is your base and you want to keep your arms in this

position when you feel ready to move to the next step.

2. This is a great place to work on your core and upper body strength. Lift your knees off the ground so you're balancing on your toes and shift the weight forwards and backwards, keeping your breath steady.
3. If you're ready to take it up a notch, make sure that your interlaced hands are creating a little space for your head to go in, place your head down in your hands and step your feet back so you're balancing on your tip toes. Slowly start to walk the feet up towards your face. A good drill for this pose is to walk the feet up and back repeatedly, again to build strength and get familiar with this movement. If you're practising near a wall, you can take a few gentle hops but be mindful not to kick your legs up without using your core and your breath.
4. Once you've built enough strength, as you walk your feet towards your face, they will start to feel like they can lift up effortlessly. You can start by bringing your knees one by one, or together, into your chest. If this feels wobbly, stay here and do not worry about straightening your legs. If it feels stable, straighten your legs pointing them up towards the sky. Always remember to breathe!
5. Aim for control as you come down, and think about reversing each step you took to make your way up so that you descend slowly and steadily. After coming down, always make your way into balasana (childs pose) to allow your breathing and your heart rate to slow. Be proud of yourself to wherever you got to and remember to enjoy the process!

Author profile

Angie Tiwari

Angie is the founder of Tiwari Yoga and PRITHVI. She loves debunking yoga's myths, celebrating South Asian culture and ancient rituals, and really believes you can do yoga anywhere. If you want to learn more from Angie, check out @tiwariyoga and @weareprithvi.



TIPS & TRICKS

Where's your breath? It's so easy in a pose like this to forget to breathe. Keeping your breath steady will help you feel more in control, steadier, and maintain the pose for a longer duration.

The wall is your best friend. When you're first starting out, the wall is going to give you that support, and the confidence to know when you're ready to start practising away from the wall.

Film yourself. Use your phone to film yourself moving into this pose. Watch it back and analyse. It can be so much more obvious when we watch ourselves back where it is we can make improvements.

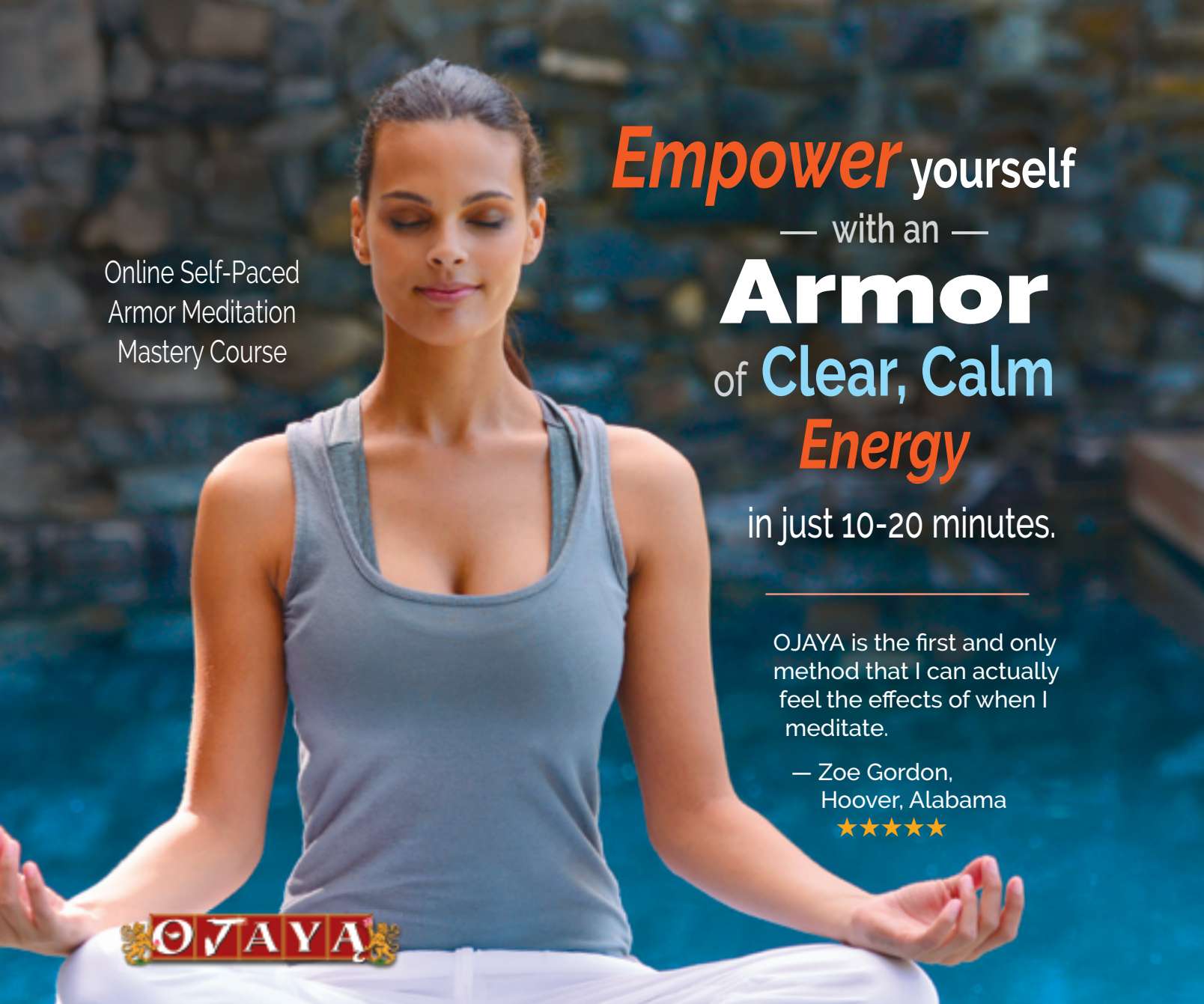


CAUTIONS

Make sure you're not dumping all your weight into your head (you'll know you're doing this if your head or neck hurts during or after the pose). You can avoid this by building strength in your upper body through poses such as adho mukha svanasana (downward facing dog) and catur svanasana (dolphin pose)

Slow and steady! I totally get the desire to just want to be upside down, and often I see people throwing their legs in the air in the hope they'll magically stay there! The reality is we need to take our time to prepare our mind and body for sirasana. Learning to respect the process will ultimately bring us more joy as we journey into the pose.

Take it in stages. Be acutely aware of where you are at, and if you feel strong enough to bring your knees into chest before extending the legs, then just stay here and focus on bringing your breathing into control. Being intuitive is key to avoiding injuries.



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OJAYA came when I was about to give up on meditation in general. If you are thinking to meditate, look no further. — Josh Woolfolk, Hemet, California ★★★★★

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SOOTHING is exactly how it feels. I'm absolutely amazed how powerful this meditation is. OJAYA is the most beneficial meditation I've ever experienced. — Britt Burns, Monterey Park, California ★★★★★

I'M 65, and OJAYA is the best thing I have done for myself in my whole life. So relaxing, so deeply restful. My music now comes from such a profound inner depth. I've never felt so alive, ever. — Richard Bosworth, Bellevue, Washington ★★★★★

MANY TIMES throughout the course tears came to my eyes. WOW! — Rick Blanda, US Air Force TSgt, retired, Warner Robins, Georgia ★★★★★

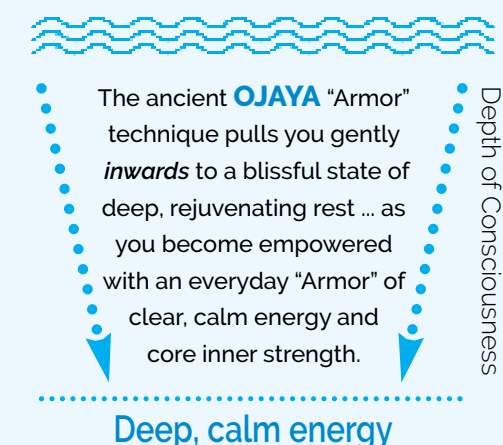
MEDITATION used to be a chore. Now it's truly deeply relaxing and healing. I've tried many other practices, but nothing compares. The technique pulls you deeper than I had ever imagined. I've never experienced results like this in such a short time. — Nick Bobay, Fort Wayne, Indiana ★★★★★

THANK YOU Sukaishi ... for this wonderful experience ... and for the mastery which you teach these ancient secrets. I'm one of the many who found what they were looking for. You are truly one who works for the happiness of others. — Raia Vicolov, Tulcea, Romania ★★★★★

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Recipes & photos by
Carleigh Bodrug



Cabbage Steaks

Herby and delicious cabbage steaks with a tahini marinade.

- Equipment**
- Chopping board
 - Knife
 - Baking sheet
 - Baking parchment or silicone sheet
 - Bowl or cup
 - Pastry brush

- Ingredients**
- 3/4 cup vegetable broth
 - 1/4 cup tahini & peanut butter mixed
 - 4 garlic cloves minced
 - 1 tsp dried parsley
 - 1 tsp paprika
 - 1/2 tsp sea salt
 - 3 tbsp nutritional yeast
 - 3 tbsp balsamic glaze
 - 3/4 green cabbage
 - 1/4 cup crushed peanuts
 - 1/4 cup fresh parsley



Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Create the marinade by combining the broth, tahini, garlic, parsley, paprika, and sea salt until a sauce is formed.

Slice the cabbage into 1-inch thick “steaks”. Brush the marinade over each side. Finish off with a balsamic glaze and sprinkle crushed peanuts over top.

Bake for half an hour, until crispy. Finish off with more nutritional yeast and fresh lemon juice as desired.

Prep Time
15 mins
Cook Time
30 mins
Servings 6

Strawberry Top Vinegar

A great way to save strawberry tops from going to landfill

- Equipment**
- Knife
 - Chopping board
 - Jar
 - Bottle
 -
- Ingredients**
- 1/2 cup strawberry tops
 - 1 1/2 cup white wine vinegar

Instructions

Pour vinegar and strawberry tops into a sealable jar. Allow to rest at room temperature for at least 2 days. Transfer the mixture to a sealable bottle, discarding the tops. Use as you would regular vinegar!



Prep Time
5 mins
Resting Time
2 days



Prep Time
10 mins
Cook Time
40 mins
Servings 6

Green Goddess Soup

A delicious vegan soup utilizing broccoli stems and a variety of aromatic green vegetables.

- Equipment**
- Chopping board
 - Knife
 - Sheet pan
 - Baking parchment
 - Blender
 - Pot

- Ingredients**
- 2 broccoli stems chopped
 - 1 green bell pepper chopped
 - 1 zucchini chopped
 - 1 red onion chopped
 - 1 broccoli head, broken into florets
 - 1 head garlic
 - 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
 - 4 cups salted vegetable broth
 - 3 handfuls spinach
 - 1/2 cup coconut milk
 - 1 tsp lemon juice

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 375F. On a parchment-lined baking sheet or cast iron pan, add the broccoli stems, bell pepper, zucchini, onion, and head of broccoli. Drizzle with olive oil and add the nutritional yeast and some freshly cracked sea salt and black pepper. Slice the top off your head of garlic and drizzle with olive oil. Cover in foil. Bake both for 35 minutes until the vegetables are cooked through.

Transfer all ingredients listed to a pot or high-speed blender, squeezing out the garlic into the pot or blender and discarding of the skin. Either using an immersion blender or your countertop blender, combine the ingredients until a smooth soup is formed. Taste and adjust salt as needed.



PHOTO PEXELS / ANNA POJ, ILLUSTRATION: FREEPIK

Blend into Nature

Turn tea time into a meditative experience honoring your deep connection with Mother Earth.

Written by Amy McCoy

In today's society, I think a lot of us have forgotten that we are not separate from nature. We are actually an extension of it! Becoming unrooted from where we came while carrying around this feeling of disconnect causes all sorts of subconscious turmoil in our bodies. Eventually, this spiritual disconnect manifests into physical symptoms as well. But it doesn't have to be this way. You have the power to make a change and stop this from happening! Just like people, each herb and flower has its own set of unique qualities. Steeping the plant in hot water helps them release these qualities. Taking time for ourselves to sip the tea forms a sacred meditation that blends us back into alignment with nature. In a matter of minutes, with the gifts from mother earth and your own hands, you can get grounded into wholeness and the oneness that it brings.

Just like a mother wanting to nourish and support her child, the herb oat straw or "mother's milk," does just that! This supportive nerve tonic goes to the root of a frazzled nervous system and helps to rebuild and rejuvenate it back into balance. Not only is this grain chocked full of vitamins, it also has the added benefit of boosting alpha wave activity in the brain. These are the same waves that get produced during a relaxed and restful meditation. So essentially, it's meditation in a grain!

When the smell of lavender tickles my nose, I automatically feel as though I have levitated out into an open field. Wrapped in nothing but a serenity of raw, organic stillness. Instantly calming any insecurities and releasing any constrictions. Finding peace within my soul again! Breathing a sigh of relief all the way to the core of my being.

I don't know about you, but the dainty little sunny faced flower of chamomile makes me smile! Just looking at the flower brings a sense of happiness! Actually, it is said that the Egyptians dedicated chamomile to the sun and worshiped it above all other herbs for its healing properties. This "earth apple" is

humble yet powerful, helping to relax and unwind the whole body. Tingly refreshing peppermint helps soften and release stress that has manifested into muscle tension. Its uplifting scent brings clarity and awareness helping you step into your higher self. Bringing clean fresh renewing energy while invigorating you to be the best version of you possible! As I add the strength of oat straw and the vigor of peppermint to my mixing bowl forming a unique meditative dance with each stir of the little bits of mother earth. Followed by the sweetness of chamomile and the calmness of lavender, one by one bringing their own unique essence coming together in a beautiful unity. Adding the hot water beckons the medicines from each. As I nourish my body with this elixir, I am transforming into one in this sacred meditation.

Blend Your Own Meditation tea

- Makes 4 cups of 6oz tea
- 2 tbsp Organic dried Oat Straw (green tops)
 - 1 tbsp Organic dried Chamomile (german)
 - 1 tbsp Organic dried Peppermint (mentha x piperita)
 - 1 tsp Organic dried Lavender (lavandula angustifolia)

Sprinkle each herb one at a time into your mortar. Take your pestle and lightly crush the herb to help it release medicine oils. Add crushed herb to your mixing bowl. Once all herbs are added stir together.

If you wish as you stir, say the affirmation: *'I am nourished in harmony and balance with nature'.*

Place your blend into an infuser and steep in hot water for 8 minutes. Take out the infuser. As you release the herbs back to Mother Earth thank them for sharing their healing with you. Sip on your tea and enjoy!



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CLEAREST
WAY INTO THE
UNIVERSE IS
THROUGH A
FOREST
WILDERNESS.

— John Muir

PHOTO BY MOHAN REDDY, PEXELS

KINDRED SPIRITS

Interviews with powerful & influential meditators

Dancing To The Heartbeat of Mother Earth

MedMag correspondent
Forrest Neal went deep into
Navajo territory to explore
ancient Native American
spiritual practices, and found
a powerful teacher in the
Navajo Elder, Wally Brown.

Words by Forrest Neal
Photos by Shane Brown



The booming vibrations of a beating drum sent shockwaves through the air as I entered my first Navajo pow wow in Flagstaff, Arizona.

As the drumbeat continued, a harmony of voices began to sing, while a group of elder women performed a traditional dance for everyone in attendance to see.

I couldn't help but feel the overwhelming energy in the room. At that moment, it felt as though a part of my heart that had been torn by past trauma was being gently sewn back together. I felt that I was being healed on a deep level, and reconnected to something that I could only describe as my "primordial essence" as a human being.

The Navajo sweat lodge ceremony has deeply spiritual healing effects as well. In the sweat lodge, a group of participants sits in sweltering temperatures while engaging in meaningful conversations, which can often lead to profound revelations about life and existence.

I became so fascinated by these ceremonial practices that I decided to speak with one of the Elders of the tribe, who could teach me more about these spiritual & therapeutic practices.

Wally Brown is a popular Navajo Historian who shares his work, Traditional Navajo Teachings, with an audience well in excess of half a million people.

Forrest Neal: Why are native ceremonies like powwows and sweat lodges so therapeutic?

Wally Brown: The sweat lodge is very hot and dark, so there are no distractions. All that you can hear are the voices of the people you are with, and you can focus completely on what is being discussed.

The teaching in some way is to say that you are "Entering The Womb of Mother Earth." While you are in the womb of Mother Earth you are being cleansed. If you have done it properly, you have prepared yourself to be aware of what is being given to you, whether it's words spoken by the other people in the sweat lodge, or with just The Holy People (higher dimensional spiritual beings) and you.

Forrest: Because sweat lodges are often considered a traditional activity by some tribes which prevents non-natives from participating, how can someone replicate the environment so that they can experience the same beneficial effects of a sweat lodge?

Wally: Something that could replicate the heat and the sweating is probably the sauna, which has beneficial effects on the physical level. On the spiritual level, it has to have that darkness. If a person really wants to experience the traditional practice of the sweat lodge, there are Natives who provide the sweat lodge for other people.

When the discussion turned to other tribes' use of the Peyote Cactus for ceremonial purposes, Wally told me that he is personally more inclined to promote the attendance of ceremonial events like powwows for therapeutic purposes.

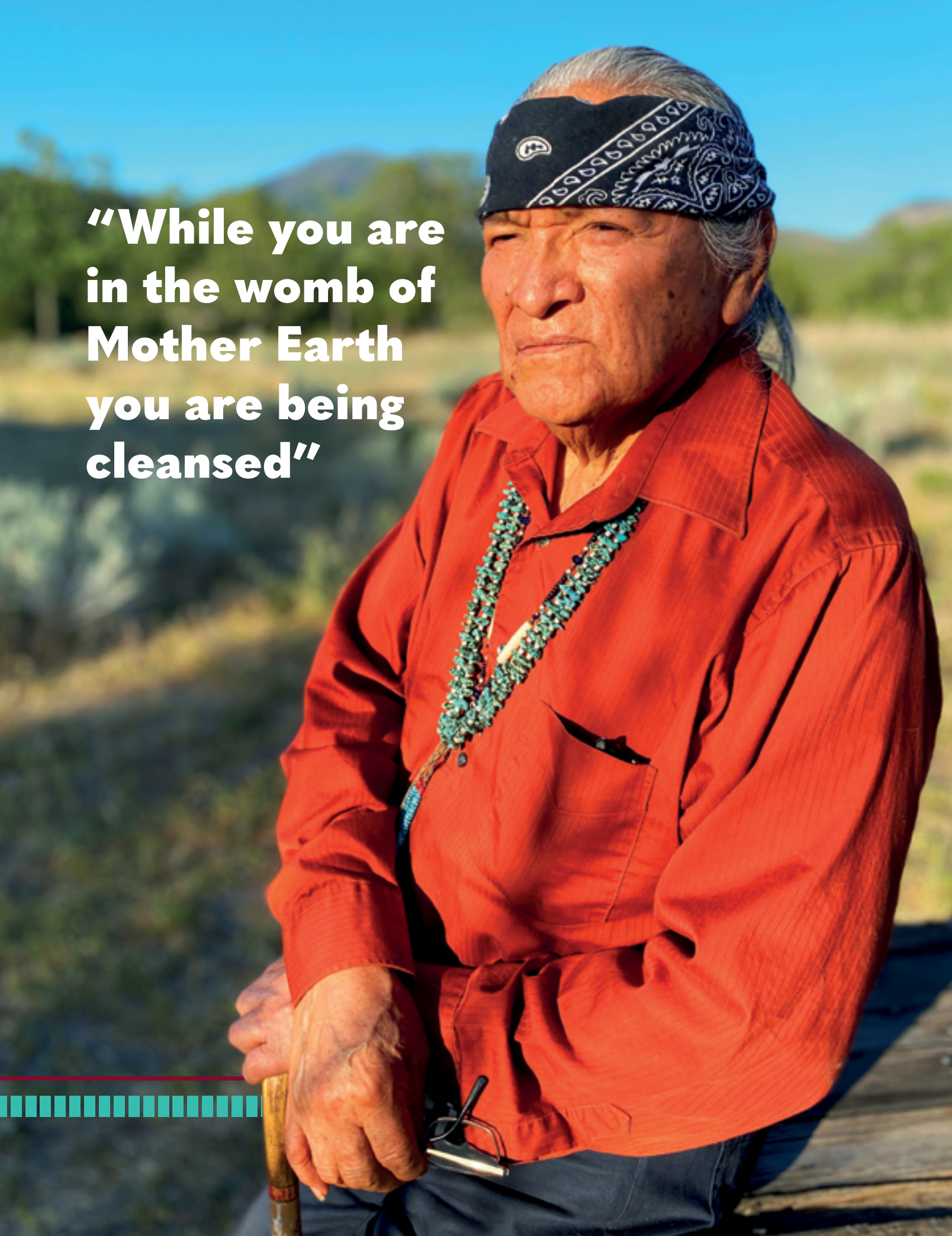
Wally: "Powwows, to me, are a time when people are coming together. They are enjoying time with their families and enjoying the environment. The dances all have meanings. It's putting yourself in tune with the physical environment. It's dancing to the heartbeat of Mother Earth."

Native Americans have been practicing therapeutic activities ceremonially as part of their culture for a very long time.

While some Native cultures use psychoactive plant medicines like peyote and ayahuasca to connect with themselves and Mother Nature, others use practices like drumming, dancing, and sweat lodges instead, activating these deeply healing spiritual experiences, without needing anything that's not already inside of them.

To Wally, this is the true Navajo path. By attending powwows, participating in events like sweat lodges, and "dancing to the heartbeat of Mother Earth," we come together as people, connect with the world around us, and heal the wounds we have collectively suffered, as we have always done since the ancient peoples first walked the Earth.

“While you are in the womb of Mother Earth you are being cleansed”





ECCO TRIBE

We’ve Been Looking At “The Environment” All Wrong For Centuries!

While many of us like to think of ourselves as “environmentalists” doing what we can to “save the environment,” a new wave of Earth Activists is moving beyond those words, in favor of a more holistic, connected perspective on our deeply rooted Oneness with nature.

Interviews by Jovanna Benavente, Tamar Ellerton, and Kevin Ellerton
Words by Kevin Ellerton

Every summer, when my sisters and I were growing up, our parents would throw us in the car and drive us around the western USA. We visited dozens of national parks, from Arches and Badlands to Yosemite and Zion. These epic trips into the bosom of nature instilled in my developing spirit a kind of reverence for Mother Earth... though I would hardly have admitted it to anyone (even myself) at the time.

As an undergrad studying anthropology, I had the opportunity to join an archaeological dig in the jungles of Belize. Sensing adventure, I dove in. Drifting off to sleep in an open-air gazebo, deep in the heart of the rainforest, soaking in the sounds of raindrops on banana leaves, birds and monkeys calling out before nightfall, undulating symphonies of insects, frogs, lizards, and who knows what else, singing the songs of dwindling dusk... I knew, in that moment, drifting off to sleep in that gazebo, that the jungle would always have a piece of my heart.

I’ve always believed in protecting and cultivating nature, investing in green energy, reducing pollution... all that good stuff that people call “environmentalism.” I tend to avoid ego-labels, but until a few weeks ago, if someone called me “an environmentalist,” I probably would have agreed. That all changed when I interviewed Vandana Shiva for this Earth Issue of Meditation Magazine.

Vandana Shiva is a world-renowned “environmentalist” – well, that’s what people tend to call her, anyway. Vandana is known for her prolific work in biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, and ecology... and to a lesser extent, for her deeply spiritual perspective on life. So when I asked her, as my “opening question,” if her passion for environmentalism is rooted in her spirituality, I was startled, surprised, and taken aback by her answer.

“I’ve never used the word ‘environmental.’ When people introduce me as an ‘environmentalist’ I say, ‘I’m not that!’”

At this point, I had that sinking feeling in my stomach, like I’d stayed up all night

studying for an exam, walked into the test, sat down, looked at the questions, and realized that I’d studied the wrong chapter. I’d been reading up on Vandana Shiva, the famous “environmentalist.” If she’s not an “environmentalist,” then what are we even talking about here?

Vandana must have sensed my anxiety, because in her very next sentence, she put it all in perspective, in a way that changed my view of “environmentalism” forever:

“...because ‘environment’ is that which surrounds you. I’m not talking about that which surrounds you. I’m talking about that which gives you life.”

My sister Tamar had become familiar with Vandana’s work while pursuing her masters in Holistic Science at Schumacher College in the UK.

Tamar sat beside me as a co-anchor in the Vandana interview, and in our conversation with Satish Kumar (founder of Schumacher) as well. Tamar had set up these interviews (and our conversation with Eliane Cohen) through her own personal network of eco-activists that she had met through Schumacher, and through her own spiritual journeys in Central America.

I had seen how Tamar’s perspective on nature and ecology had changed through her journeys, but I had never really understood where she was coming from. I kind of thought she had gone off the hippie-dippie-deep-end, hugging trees, talking to birds, and just generally, you know, frolicking in the jungle. My focus for many years has been on meditation, meditation, meditation. Tamar’s focus has shifted toward Earth Work, Gaia, and Mother Nature.

But in our conversations with Tamar’s colleagues, friends, mentors and heroes, I began to see the common themes in the ways they were thinking, and I realized: this is not some “silly hippie thing,” as Elon might call it.

This is a deeper, more primal form of environmentalism (if we can even call it that), that does not see the “environment” as something separate from ourselves, something that we need to protect and

save... but rather, sees ourselves as part of nature itself.

This is an ancient perspective that is based in physical, factual reality. We humans are just as much “animals” as any majestic moose or cuddly bunny. We are just as much “nature” as a cloud above a mountain stream, or sunset in a desert canyon.

As I spoke with Vandana Shiva, Satish Kumar, and Jarvis Smith, and watched Jovanna’s interview with Eliane Cohen, I began to realize that there is a new wave of Earth Activism arising in this world, challenging the mainstream “environmentalism” spearheaded by “environmental” activists and leaders like Elon Musk and Leonardo DiCaprio.

As I pored over our conversations, I distilled five key takeaways that helped me understand this “deeper” perspective on ecological activism:

We are not separate from “The Environment.” We are literally part of Nature.

As part of Nature, we are in communion with the rest of the biosphere. We can communicate, on some level or another, with Mother Earth.

The idea of “saving the world” comes from the same sense of separation as the idea of “conquering nature.” Instead of trying to be “saviors” or “conquerors,” we just need to realize that we are Nature, and let that knowledge guide our actions.

We cannot fix our environmental problems with the same dominating/ industrial mindset that created them.

Mother Earth will be just fine. It’s humanity (along with some of our animal cousins) that we should be worried about.

Our interviews with these eco-activists were extensive and profound. We can’t go into detail here about everything we discussed. Instead, I’ve done my best to distill some of the most relevant insights, and laid them out for you to peruse over the following pages. I’ve also included QR codes for each interview, so you can watch the full conversations if you want to learn more.

I hope you enjoy it! →

Vandana Shiva

Vandana began our conversation by talking about how our ancestors had always known that we are part of Nature:

We have a very beautiful Vedic phrase: “The Earth is our mother, and we are her children. As long as we love and protect her, she will protect us.”

So much of indigenous philosophies and cosmologies see spirituality as the way to articulate our Oneness with the Earth, and to articulate the limits that the Earth, as a sentient being, puts on our actions.

As an activist, Vandana has a knack for calling out individuals who cause problems for our collective... especially problems born of power, domination, arrogance and greed. In understanding how we humans moved away from our primal knowledge of Oneness, Vandana singled out one man in particular: Sir Francis Bacon, a prominent 17th-century Anglican statesman & philosopher (commonly credited as one of the fathers of the scientific method).

The divorce from the natural world was not an accidental one.

It’s been very constructed. It took centuries to criminalize knowledge of us as One with the Earth. That was the witch hunts, that was the inquisition.

Constructing this separation was the Inquisition-In-Chief of England, the Chancellor, Mr (Francis) Bacon.

Literally, one side would be torturing peasants because they weren’t leaving the land – because they felt like they were part of the land – and torturing women as witches, and articulating how we’ve got to torture nature to create a “masculine birth of time,” as he called it. He wrote a whole book about it: “Masculine Birth of Time.”

They saw “oneness” as effeminate and weak, and they saw domination, defined in a new masculine patriarchal way, as a more secure way of knowing the world.

So we’ve actually walked about 400 or 500 years in this zombie path of a mechanical world.

And it isn’t just inadequate because

it’s not telling you how beautiful this world is and how generous the Earth is... but worse, it is trampling on knowledge systems, epistemological systems, that are deeply aware of that Oneness.

This narrow mechanical vision went hand in hand with extractivism and greed. It is the urge to dominate, to profit from. And you couldn’t have had extractivism of the kind that is ruining the Earth, without the idea of breaking her up into parts, and saying “The Earth Is Dead.”

This became the transition from Terra Madre – The Earth as a Living Mother – to terra nullius, the Earth as empty. And this became the legal jurisprudence for colonization. When the African aboriginal people were pushed to the margins, it was terra nullius. And terra nullius is still the way we behave with respect to the Earth – that it’s empty.

Our interconnectedness with the Earth has been broken by what I call ecological apartheid. Just as people fought against apartheid in South Africa, and people around the world supported this fight, we really need to become one Unity around the world, to overcome this ecological apartheid.

Kevin: Here in the west, we still have that “domination” mindset... even within our environmental movement. We use industrial mindsets & methods to produce technologies to try to fix environmental problems that previous industries have created. Do you think that has a place in our modern world, or do you think it will create more problems?

Vandana: Any technology has what we call an “ecological footprint.”

When we do anything, we take resources from the Earth, we take materials, we take the work of people, and all of this together becomes a production system. This then requires energy to run.

All mechanical systems run on external energy, and external energy creates waste and pollution.

So if you say “I won’t use fossil fuels, but I will use even more violent ways to get scarce minerals, like the lithium for electric cars...” in reality, many of the renewables have a bigger ecological footprint!

An ecological mind looks at all the dimensions of a system, and all the relationships. That’s the “systems” point of view. A mechanical mind looks at one parameter, and reduces everything to that one parameter, even though other parameters might be broken.

If you’re working with the assumption that the Earth is dead and merely a supply of raw materials, all you will be seeking is the shallow environmentalism of a new assemblage of raw materials... putting different things together, but with the same pattern of “man as the master.” But when we know the Earth is living, then our world becomes of co-creation, and co-evolution, with deep sensitivity, deep compassion for all of life.

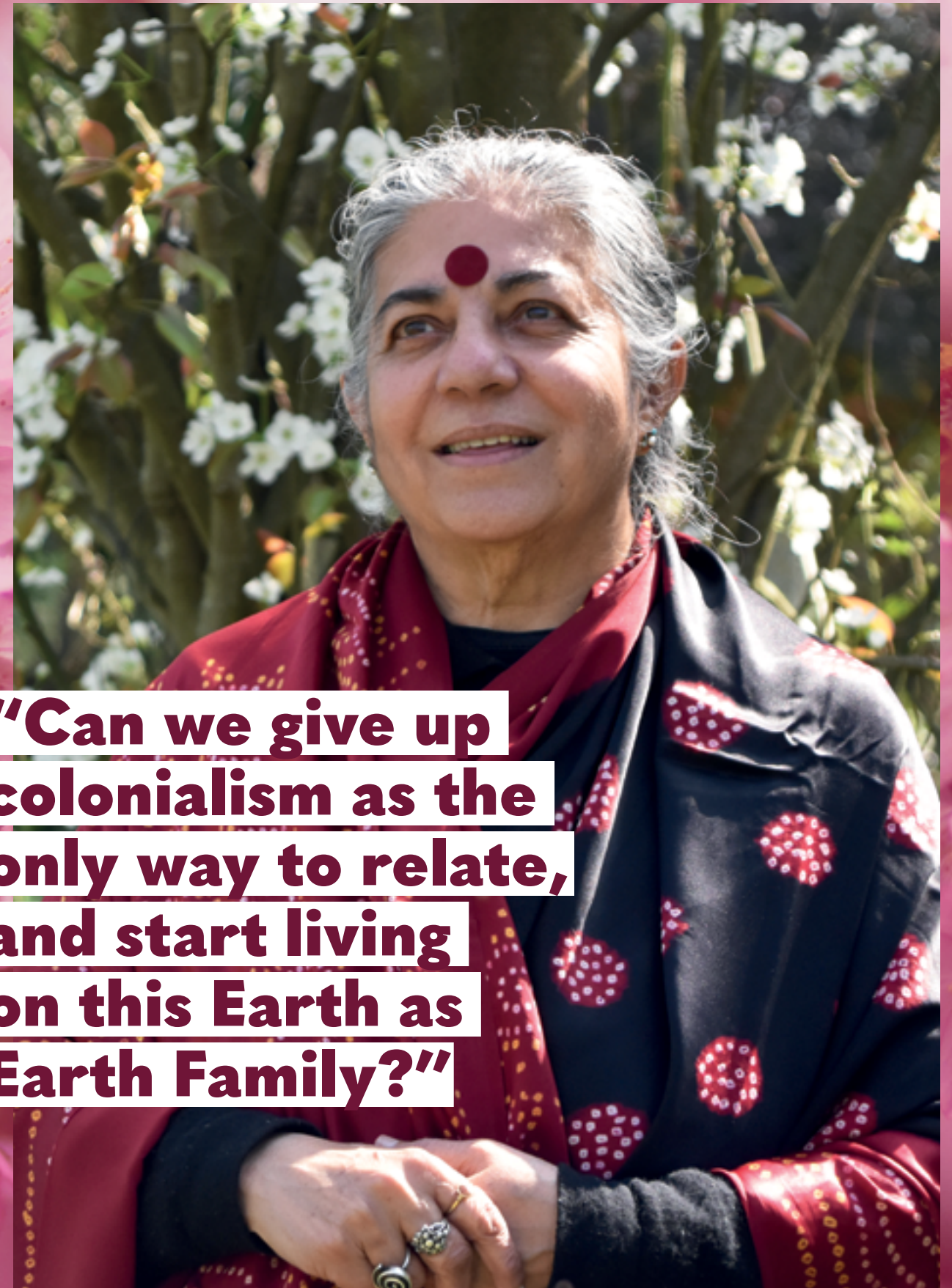
Tamar: Are you worried about the future of our Earth?

Vandana: Many people who think about climate change are going into despair. But that’s because they’re beginning with climate change as the residual impact of colonialism, industrialism, and they’re just looking at the measures of how much “parts per million” is climbing. I begin with the Earth. And therefore I never despair.

The (primordial) Earth was 290 degrees (centigrade), and, through creating biodiversity, in 3.3 billion years, she brought the temperature down to 13 degrees. 290 degrees to 13 degrees! 4,000 parts per million carbon dioxide (in the primordial Earth), reduced to 270 ppm. And we are panicking about 400? You know, she was 98% carbon dioxide, and she made it 0.03%! And in the process, she gave you your breath! From 0% oxygen to 21% oxygen!

All we have to do is – instead of keeping that arrogance of human hubris, of new violent technologies of carbon capture, geoengineering, genetic engineering, trampling on peasant rights and indigenous rights – why don’t you just look at how the Earth did it, and work with her, to do it the right way? That’s what we do in Navdanya [Vandana’s NGO in India]. We take lessons from the Earth.

I look at these massive solar plants and I say: “You did not see that every leaf of every plant is a photovoltaic cell... →



“Can we give up colonialism as the only way to relate, and start living on this Earth as Earth Family?”

PHOTO COURTESY OF NAVDANYA

except that instead of just generating consumer energy, it is generating life!”
We’ve got to get out of consumerism. From “it’s for us, it’s for us, it’s for us,” to, “how do we become part of the flow of life?”

Because the apartheid said: “nature is dead,” and, “people who work with nature are primitive,” it shut out the largest possibilities of being human on this planet in a non-violent and spiritual way.

All we have to do is: can we give up for a while the human ego? Can we give up for a while the assumptions of industrialism? Can we give up for a while colonialism as the only way to relate, and start living on this Earth as Earth Family?

Vandana Shiva is a fiery Earth Activist, known in India as the “Gandhi of Grain.”

Having published 20+ books on the subjects of biotech, bioethics, biodiversity and genetic engineering, Vandana is an outspoken critic of GMO and monoculture farming, and activist for farmers’ rights, organic food production, and sustainability in agriculture.

She has helped grassroots organizations develop green movements in countries all over the world, from Africa to Asia to Europe and Latin America, and advised major world governments about their agricultural programs.

Vandana founded The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE) in 1982, to provide guidance and direction for India’s environmental activism movement. In 1991, she founded Navdanya, an NGO that promotes biodiversity conservation, organic farming, seed diversity (rather than monoculture farming), and farmers’ rights. And in 2004, Vandana founded Bija Vidyapeeth, an international university for sustainable living, as an India-based counterpart to her friend Satish Kumar’s Schumacher College in the UK. ●

TO WATCH THE FULL VANDANA SHIVA INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE!



Satish Kumar

In June 1962, at the height of the Cold War, a twenty-six-year-old former Jain monk named Satish Kumar stood at the tomb of Mahatma Gandhi.

Inspired by Bertrand Russell’s civil disobedience against nuclear bombs, Satish (along with his friend E.P. Menon) set out on a “peace walk” of over eight thousand miles, to demonstrate the Oneness of our global human civilization.

Satish and E.P. walked from Gandhi’s tomb in New Delhi, to Moscow, to London, and Paris, and Washington – all the “nuclear” centers of the Cold War Era – finally concluding their journey, after two and a half years of walking, at the grave of John F Kennedy Jr. in Washington DC.

After concluding his epic journey, Satish has been best known as the Editor Emeritus of Resurgence & Ecologist magazine in the UK, and as the founder of Schumacher College – an international center for ecological studies in Devon, England.

My sister Tamar became aware of Satish’s work while working on her masters in Holistic Science at Schumacher. When she heard we were making an “Earth Issue” of Meditation Magazine, she knew that we needed to interview Satish.

Kevin: That 8,000-mile peace walk sounds like quite a journey. What was that like?

Satish: My life started in India, as a Jain monk. For nine years, I walked barefoot, and had no money. I begged for food, every day I went with a begging bowl. I only ate once a day. So that’s how my life started.

At that time I started to learn meditation. In the morning I woke up at 4am, and



meditated until 5:30am, and in the evening before going to bed. I was learning how to meditate as a way of life – not only in the morning and evening, because that’s a good practice to learn, and to remember, and to practice – but all day, every word you speak, every action you perform, every thought you think, they should all be mindful and heartfelt. Then you’re in meditation all the time. So spirituality and meditation became a way of life.

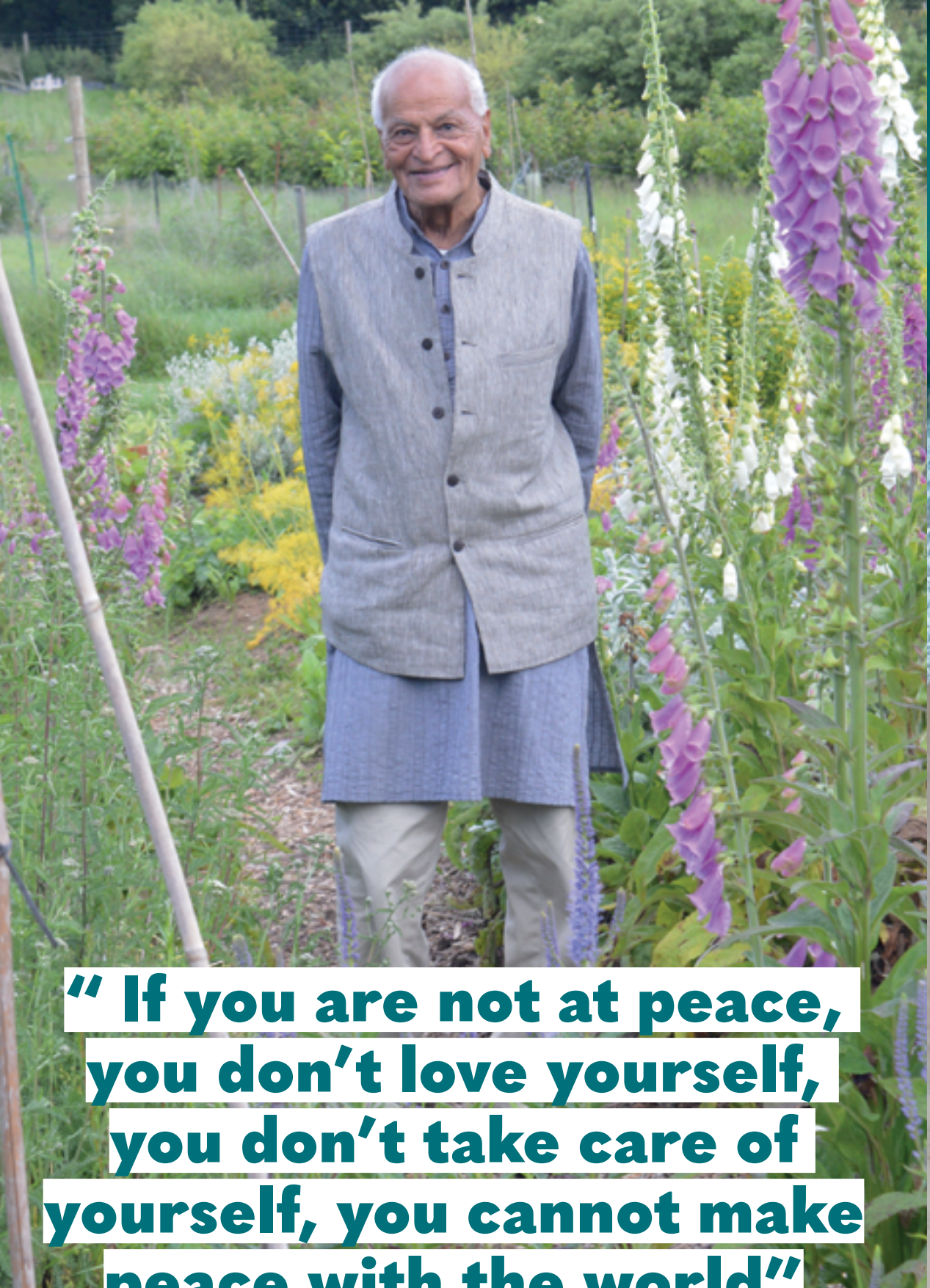
And then, at age twenty six, I left India on foot, and walked two and a half years from New Delhi, from the grave of Mahatma Gandhi, to Moscow, through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia... and then from Moscow, I went to Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium, France. And then I took a boat from Calais to Dover, and from Dover to London, and from London to

South Hampton, and then I took a boat to New York, and from New York to Washington DC. And I ended my Peace Pilgrimage at the grave of John F Kennedy. So I started at the grave of Mahatma Gandhi

(in New Delhi), and ended at the grave of JFK (in Washington DC). And I had the great fortune of meeting Martin Luther King at the end of my walk of 8,000 miles. So that was my pilgrimage for peace.

But I always say that peace is not only the absence of war. Peace is in your heart. Peace within you. If you are not at peace, you don’t love yourself, you don’t take care of yourself, you cannot make peace with the world. You have to BE peace, rather than just speak about peace. So BEING peace was my message, as well as my practice. And peace is not just with humans; we also have to be at peace with the Earth.

In 1991, I started Schumacher College. People come from all over the world come to learn about unity between humans and nature, and that humans are as much Nature, as animals, or forests, or birds, or mountains, or rivers, or oceans. And →



“ If you are not at peace, you don’t love yourself, you don’t take care of yourself, you cannot make peace with the world”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PEACE NEWS, ANDREA KUHN



learning about Gaia, that Earth is not a dead rock, Nature is not a machine, but Nature and Earth are living organisms, they have consciousness, they have intelligence, they have wisdom, they have spirit.

Sometimes, human beings think that they are separate from Nature... that they are separate from The Earth. But that is not the case.

The word “human” comes from “humus,” and “humus” means soil. Human beings are literally soil beings. We are made of The Earth.

The word ‘Nature’ comes from Latin, which means ‘Birth.’ ‘Natal’ and ‘nature’ come from the same origin. We ARE nature.

Our Nationality is Nature. “Nation,” and “Native,” also come from “Natal.” If you are a Native of New York, it means you were born in New York. Natal, nation, native. All these words come from the same root.

We are born, so we are Nature. How can we say we are separate from nature? It’s a complete misunderstanding.

We are made of the Earth. And therefore we have to act like Earth.

Earth is very generous. Because when you put one seed in the ground, the earth, the soil with the help of water and the sunshine will regenerate and multiply that one seed into a thousand fruit.

We humans are soil beings. Nature beings. We are nature. Nature is not separate from us.

We need to be like the Earth, and be kind and generous to all other living beings. When we are able to BE the Earth – not be ON the Earth, not WITH the Earth, but BE the Earth – when we ARE the Earth, then we can be like the Earth. ●

TO WATCH THE FULL SATISH KUMAR INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE!



Eliane Cohen

Millennial Earth-Worker Eliane Cohen quit her job as a private banker to pursue her passion for ecology & nature. Eliane bought land in the Cloud Forest of her native Peru, and built a regenerative eco-village called Siendo Naturaleza. Siendo Naturaleza is regenerating the Cloud Forest, and providing ecological educational programs for adults and children in the area.

Jovanna: You named your eco-village “Siendo Naturaleza.” Does that mean “Being Nature?”

Eliane: Yes, exactly! “Being Nature.” The project is not about doing, or thinking, or proving anything. It’s really about being nature. Identifying with this is what guides our actions.

Jovanna: What are the goals for the Siendo Naturaleza project?

Eliane: The goal is to be nature. And what that means is to be an active participant in the ecosystem that we’re part of.

We hear a lot of narratives around humans being horrible and bad and harmful for the Earth. But I also see the other side: we can be really amazing for



the Earth! It’s just a matter of how we engage, and how we approach, and how we live. So our goal is simply being nature, participating actively in the ecosystem that we’re part of.

Another goal is to provide an opportunity and a space to people who are seeking examples of how to live in a way that is representing Oneness. We are experiencing this worldview of separation. We are living fragmented lives of disconnection. So the hope is that by people coming here to learn and study and research, they also start feeling more connected, and less fearful of Nature. And the jungle is a very good place for that, because it’s very scary in the beginning.

Jovanna: (Laughing in vigorous agreement)

Eliane: Once we experience these moments of deep connection with Nature – these “pockets of magic” – that never goes away. We may not always stay in that space and that feeling, but we know that feeling. And that stays with us.

Jovanna: How has living with the land evolved your experience of life and spirituality?

Eliane: I feel like I have detoxed myself from mainstream culture and urban life. I live a more simple life. I need fewer things... from hygiene products to clothes. I’ve gone through a detox of consumerism, and what I believe that I need.

The more I live here, the more I become part of the place. We’re living with the land. It’s a land that’s in recovery. In certain parts we’ve intervened, and in certain parts we haven’t. We are in dialogue with the place, and the place does actually speak. We feel so cared for here, and so protected, and so welcomed. There’s a certain trust, that we are here for a reason. ●

TO WATCH THE FULL ELIANE COHEN INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE!



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIANE COHEN



“We can be really amazing for the Earth! It’s just a matter of how we engage, and how we approach, and how we live”

Jarvis Smith

Jarvis Smith is the Co-Founder of My Green Pod, which traveled with The Guardian for over a decade, and is now the UK's largest Eco Magazine, with millions of readers across the UK. As a fellow magazine publisher, I asked Jarvis:

Kevin: We're both trying to make the world a better place, right? But we're putting out magazines that use a lot of paper. What do you think about that?

Jarvis: Hahaha what a great question to start! First of all, let's just be clear: digital now has become such an intensive use of energy that it's probably just as bad to do a largely distributed digital magazine as it is a reasonably distributed print magazine. Provided you're using the best paper you can use, the best inks, so the paper can be recycled, or passed around, or kept...

Kevin: Yes! We encourage our readers to recycle our magazines by gifting them to friends.

Jarvis: Exactly. I still see National Geographic magazines from back when I was a kid! People keep them, it's a reusable product. If it's a beautiful magazine, people want it. They want it on their coffee tables, in their toilets...

But you know, what it comes down to is this: Every single product, every single commodity, every single material, every single business, every single thing we eat, wear, work in, work from, travel in, comes from Nature. Everything. The problem is, we've taken and taken and taken, and haven't given back as a species. So we have now caused a "climate crisis."

So what we do is we give back to nature when we take. We planted tens of thousands of trees in the tropics, that sequester carbon ten times more effectively than in non-tropical areas.

Gaia is a living being. If we treat her as a living being, with respect and integrity, and we give back as much as we take, or give more than we take, then we're in unity, we're in harmony, we're in co-creation.

Kevin: Yes, you've inspired me to start planting trees as part of Meditation Magazine too! I think this idea can apply to other businesses as well, not just magazines. What would you recommend to other business owners who want to be more conscious of the ways in which they are impacting our Earth? Is carbon offsetting the answer?

Jarvis: Well, carbon offsetting is not the answer, because you're not dealing with the problem in the first place. It's great to be giving back to nature when you're taking... but you don't just stick a band-aid on it.

You look at the root cause of the problem, and you actually deal with it at the root. What is it within your business that's causing toxicity for the planet, and for humans? If you're not looking at those two things, then that's the root cause of the problem. If you're just planting trees and not looking at the supply chain and everything else, then that's a huge issue.

What business can do now is just really evaluate the very basic principles. Make sure you're pulling away completely from fossil fuels. Move into 100% renewables. Support nature in as much of the business model as you possibly can, by using toxic-free products, avoiding single-use-plastic. All of these things are pretty obvious.

But I just look at it like this: If you are not in relationship with nature, if you haven't made that reconnection with this conscious being, Gaia, that supports life, then you're already doing damage. What you do is: create stillness in your life, be mindful, be aware, perhaps meditate, and then you begin to build a relationship with yourself, which is nature. Once you begin to build a relationship with yourself as nature, then you begin to experience yourself as part of nature, in co-creation with nature. And that changes everything.

Kevin: Do you think plants, and rocks, and Earth, experience some form of

consciousness, even though they don't have brains and nervous systems like ours?

Jarvis: One hundred percent yes. I know this to be true. This is my experience. The reason why the shamans were able to heal people is because they were able to listen to nature, and the plants would communicate what would be the best remedy for a particular illness.

I've communicated with all kinds of – what we would perceive to be – beings that don't communicate: trees, rocks, the ground...

I was invited back in 2006 to go on a documentary – because some TV researchers knew that I was a kind of "tree-hugging, spiritual hippie." It was called an "eco-observational documentary." We didn't know where we were going, or what it was about. All we were told was that it would be a very extreme environment, and it would be to highlight the issues around what we now know to be the climate crisis.

So, I was chosen, along with eleven other people on the show. We had to have injections, hepatitis and polio all of these things that you would have to have if you were going abroad.

It turned out that we were dumped on a landfill just outside of London! We were dumped there with nothing. There was just literally a landfill, and we had to build somewhere to live, somewhere to eat, somewhere to shower, somewhere to sh*t... we had to build an environment out of other peoples' waste.

So the show was to highlight that we are throwing stuff away... but there is no "away!" It goes into the Earth and causes toxic aftermath. And what we are throwing away – could it be reused, or recycled, or upcycled?

This was back in 2006. I completely embraced the show, and got really into it. You can watch this, by the way. It was on Channel 4, which is a very mainstream station in the UK. It was called "Dumped." This completely transformed my life.

So, on the third week, the local rubbish truck went around picking up trash, as it does from every street, and every city, every week. And it came and dumped it →

"Once you begin to build a relationship with yourself as nature, then you begin to experience yourself as part of nature"

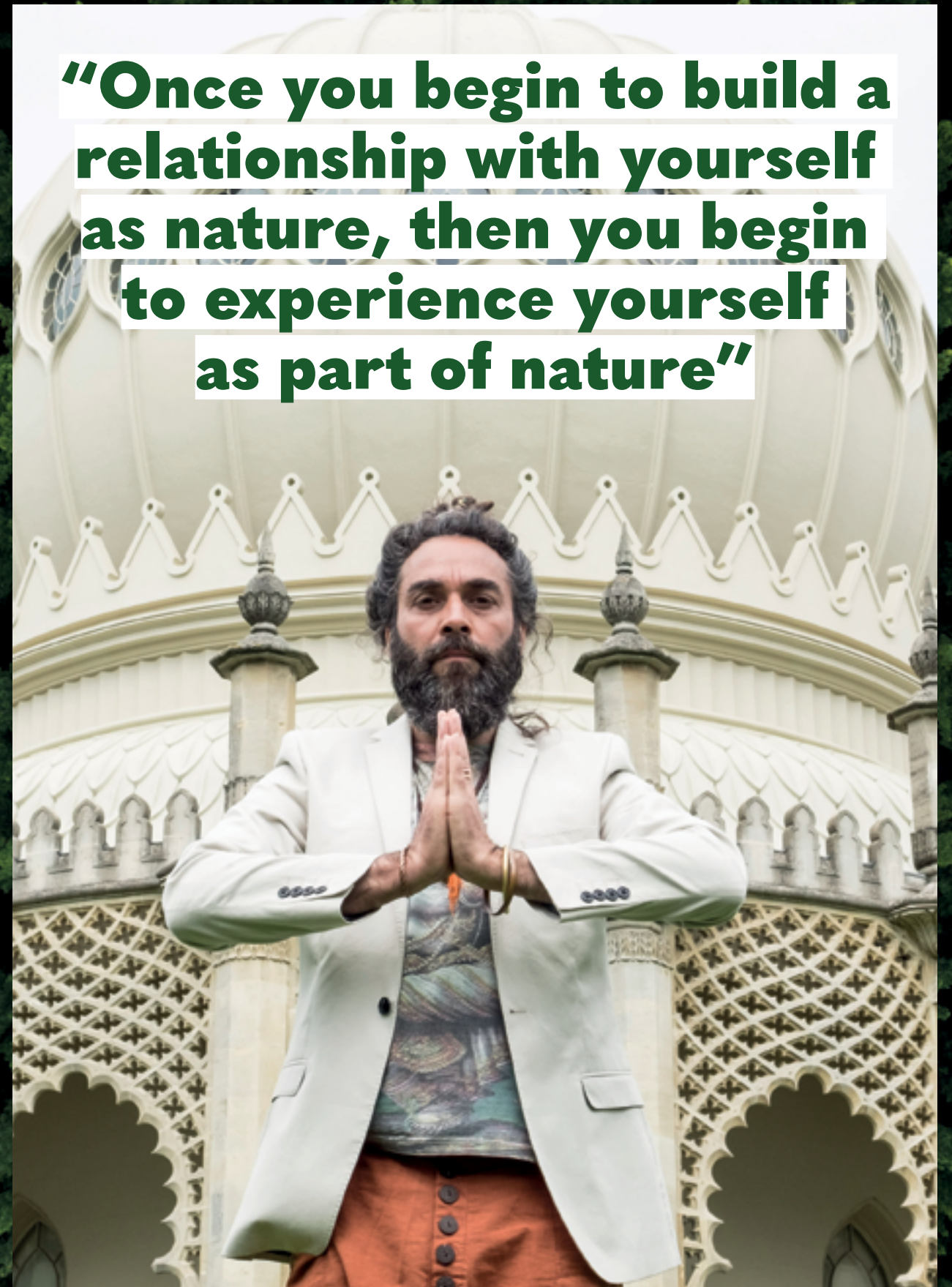


PHOTO COURTESY OF JARVIS SMITH

Within a year, I launched the world's biggest eco magazine: National Geographic Green. And what we do today is an extension of that. We simply educate and inspire people through the vibration and frequency of love.

Kevin: What do you think it will take to wake up humanity to take care of our Earth?

Jarvis: Most people have a near death experience before they really truly start experiencing life. The one thing that humans are all scared of is dying.

What's happened recently with the pandemic is that we've had the biggest mass-mobilizing shamanic awakening, probably ever in human history. Everybody went through this at the same time. We all had this spiritual and physical experience, so there's no going backwards. You can't close that door. It's happened.

Kevin: Wow. That brings a lot of perspective. If things get really bad and we see our planet going down the drain, people will start to realize that we have to take care of it... like what happened with the pandemic. It seems we humans learn the hard way sometimes.

Jarvis: The ecosystems are changing. It's inevitable that temperatures are going to rise beyond what we've experienced in the past. That's inevitable. But what Nature said to me the last time I communicated with her about this, she said to me, that if we could get out of the way and start respecting her – just respecting her... we don't have to fix anything, just show a bit of appreciation – then she could magically fix everything, just like that.

So what our job is, as conscious beings, light-workers, we are being asked to become beacons of light and hope, so that people can be attracted, like moths to light... so that they can see that there's another way of being. ●

TO WATCH THE FULL JARVIS SMITH INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE!



on our site. And we had to dress up in this kind of covid-style gear, with the mask and protective gloves and overalls and things, and start sifting through this stuff that had been dumped on our site. There were three bins: there was a “go to landfill” bin, there was a “recycling” bin, and there was a “compostable” bin. We had to choose where this stuff went.

After about twenty minutes, I started to get a really bad headache, like pulsing, like the morning after your eighteenth birthday, you know that kind of feeling. But because of my shamanic training, and my reiki, and all of that kind of meditative way of being, I said to camera: “I cannot do this anymore. I feel sick. I need to go and lie down.”

So the camera followed me. I went and I laid down on the Earth, and I started to breathe. I knew how to use

my breath - because that's how I was trained - to release toxins and toxic energy within me. So I was releasing, releasing, releasing. And then what I'd do is I'd draw up from the Earth, to replenish my frequency, rebalance, and then it would have revitalized me, right? So I drew some breath in. And as I drew this breath in, I got this, like a bolt of lightning go through me. And I heard these words:

“How you are feeling now, is how I feel. I'm sick, and I need you to tell people.”

Genuinely, the Earth, or something, spoke to me. In my ear. In an audible fashion.

I cried, because it was like an epiphany wake-up moment. I committed to camera that I would dedicate my life's work, and my business, to educating and inspiring people about the importance of the damage that we were doing to the planet.

You Have A Story To Tell

Mindful writing instructor April Dávila is on a mission to help you tell it

Award-winning author April Dávila took up mindfulness meditation to deal with stress. She had no idea how much the practice would benefit her career.

In 2006, Dávila eliminated other distractions from her life to focus on writing full time. She quickly learned that spending more hours in front of her laptop didn't alleviate her writer's block, nor did it help her craft more compelling characters or tell stories that crackled with tension. Her artistic angst only increased as the years went by and her novel remained unfinished, her short stories repeatedly rejected.

To manage her frustration, Dávila established a regular meditation practice. Sitting every day and studying with renowned teachers such as Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach, she experienced many of the benefits she'd been told to expect (less stress, better sleep, more meaningful relationships), but she also rediscovered the joy of storytelling, which led to more clarity and productivity.

Before long she finished her manuscript and signed with an agent who sold the book a few months later. She wrote a short story that was snatched up by the first journal she submitted it to and was subsequently nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She

wrote a second novel in a fraction of the time it took to write the first. Her debut won a prestigious award. For the first time, her writing career had momentum.

“Everything started to change,” Dávila said, “when I turned the wisdom of my meditation practice toward my writing.”

Curious by nature, Dávila explored the question of how exactly mindfulness meditation had changed her writing and how it might help others. Research in hand, she created the **6-Week Mindful Writers Challenge** to teach writers the skills they need to achieve their goals.

The 6-Week Mindful Writers Challenge builds writing into meditation practice with daily hour-long videos. Once a week, cohorts meet with Dávila for guided, online writing workshops

to give and receive feedback on their work.

Dávila has created an immersive experience aimed at helping writers connect with their own love of writing, hone their craft, and build a creative habit that will take them wherever they want to go. ●

SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE CAMERA TO VISIT **MINDFULWRITERS.ONLINE** FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE 6-WEEK MINDFUL WRITERS CHALLENGE



GET PUBLISHED!
Graduates of the 6-Week Mindful Writers Challenge get priority consideration for publication in Meditation Magazine. Write your story. Share it with the world.

DÁVILA HELPS WRITERS TO...

Build a consistent writing practice

Master the inner critic

Write more relatable characters

Banish writer's block forever

Understand story structure

Find equanimity through self-compassion

Do Plants Have Spirits That Can Communicate with Us?

Kevin, Jovanna, and renowned Peruvian artist (and shaman) Jheferson Saldaña Valera, explore plant consciousness, ayahuasca art, and our relationship with Pachamama.

Art by Jheferson Saldaña Valera

As this Earth Issue of Meditation Magazine began to take shape, we realized that we needed to include at least one feature on shamanic art.

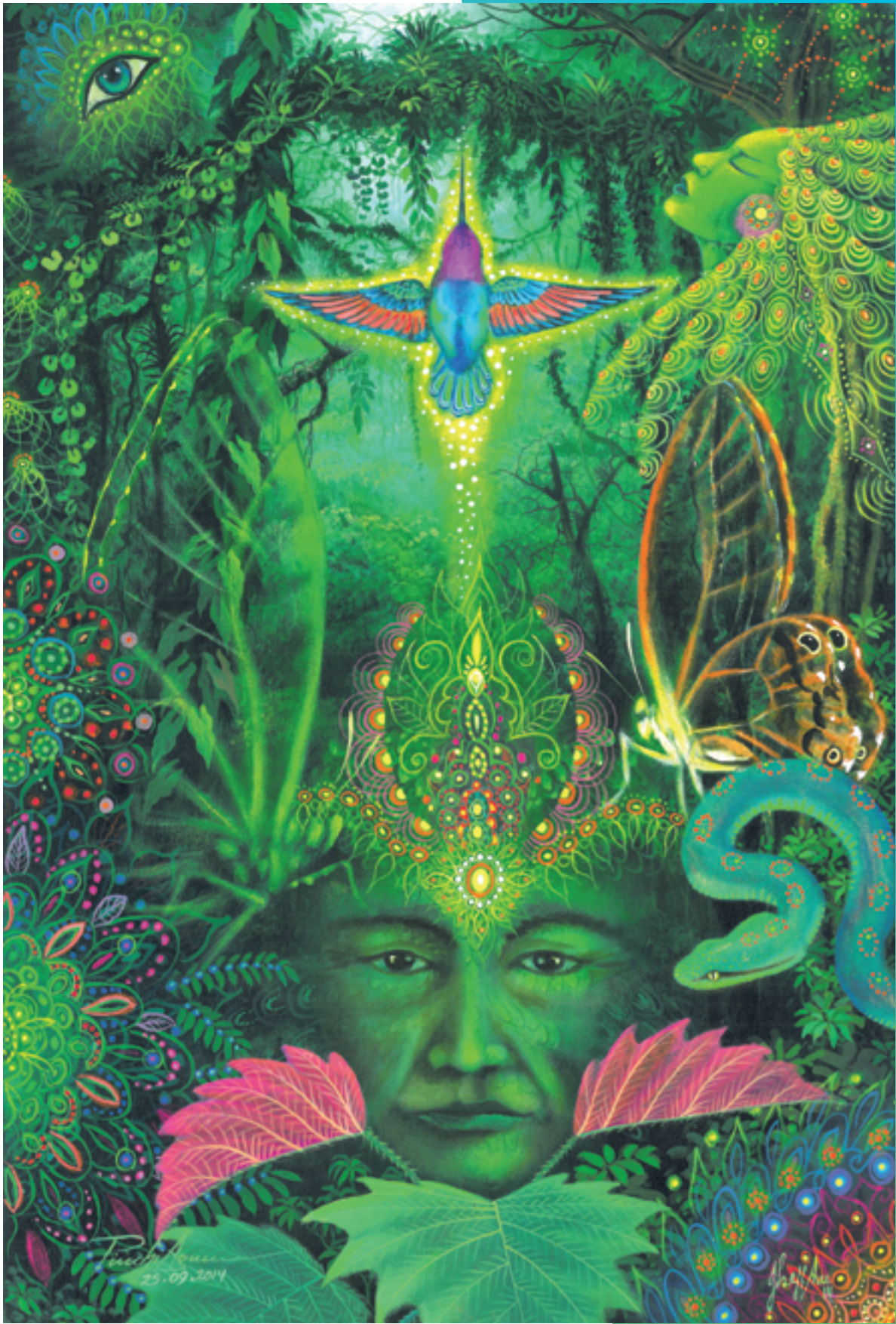
Shamans who work with psychedelics like ayahuasca and mushrooms often paint scenes depicting the spirits of plants, animals, and Mother Nature.

We did some digging, and found some beautiful visionary art from a Peruvian

shaman named Jheferson Saldaña Valera. We were able to contact Jheferson in Peru by WhatsApp, and had a very interesting conversation about ayahuasca art, shamanic visions, and communicating with the spirits of plants.

On the following pages, you can explore some of Jheferson's ayahuasca visions, along with excerpts from our conversation (translated and paraphrased from Spanish by Jovanna Benavente). →





Previous spread:
"Energia Felina;"
Clockwise from left:
"ISANGHA Espiritu
Medicinal;"
"Flor de Vida"



"Without our connection to nature, we are nothing. To experience the fullness of being human, we need to connect with Mother Earth"

Kevin: When I look at ayahuasca art, and psychedelic art in general, I often see deep themes of plants, animals, and the natural world. Whenever I've taken psychedelics, I've felt those deep connections with nature, and had visions very similar to what people around the world are depicting in their visionary art. Why do you think psychedelics like ayahuasca show us visions that are so often focused on Mother Nature?

Jheferson: Without our connection to nature, we are nothing. To experience the fullness of being human, we need to connect with Mother Earth, with the plants, with the animals. If we don't, we're just like zombies walking around, not knowing the depths of the connection that we have with Mother Nature. There are different ways to connect with nature. I come from a line of medicine men. In my family, in this area of the world, we use Aya to realize that connection. In other areas of the world, people use meditation. It is a disservice to ourselves not to appreciate the abundant blessings that Mother Earth is providing for us.

Kevin: When we ingest plant medicines like ayahuasca, they show us very specific visions, and give us specific insights into the nature of reality. Are these visions and insights just the reactions of our own brains to the chemicals in the plants? Or do the plants actually have some kind of consciousness, or spirits, that are communicating with us?

Jheferson: Many people who have spiritual experiences when taking ayahuasca or mushrooms assume that it is just their brains generating hallucinations, and that it's a bad thing. But this is not a bad thing at all. What we don't realize as human beings is that there are parallel worlds that we don't have access to most of the time. We ingest these plants so that we can receive downloads of insight from these plants. Some people judge it and become alarmed, because it's not a plane that we have access to all the time. That's why it's so important to be guided by somebody (like a Shaman) who has experience with these parallel worlds and planes. →



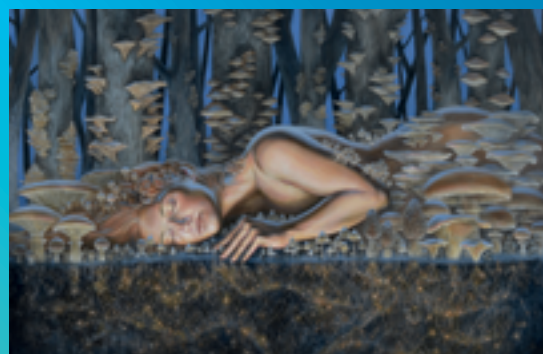
Clockwise from left:
 "Sabiduría Shipiba;"
 "Ojo de la Conciencia"



Clockwise from left:
"Conexion Celeste;"
"Mycelium Dreaming"
48"x36", acrylic on
canvas, 2018 by
Autumn Skye;
"Puma Guardian"

Kevin: On a recent mushroom trip, a few months ago, I had a powerful experience. In "reality," I was lying in a comfy bed, surrounded by sheets and pillows. But the mushrooms transported me into another world. The bed became the forest floor, and the blankets transformed into blankets of mushrooms, covering my body. Trees towered above me, as roots grew around – and through – my body. I could hear the mushrooms communicating with me, telepathically, an idea that did not need to be spoken to be understood: "Hello Human! We have encountered others like you, here with us, beneath the forest floor. We will be with you again, resting together in Mother Earth, again and again, for eternity." It may sound morbid or dark, but it actually felt loving and peaceful. A few days ago, while I was searching Google for shamanic art to include in this Earth Issue of Meditation Magazine, I came across a painting by Autumn Skye, which looked almost exactly like the experience that I'd had that day. It was as if the mushrooms had communicated

**"Every plant
has its
own energy,
its own
frequency,
its own
vibration"**



ART: AUTUMN SKYE, AUTUMNSKYEART.COM

exactly the same message to her as they did to me. Meanwhile, ayahuasca artists around the world depict other recurring themes: jaguars, jungles, birds, water, stars, things like that. Have you noticed different kinds of messages from different plants? Do specific plants have specific spirits, specific personalities?

Jheferson: Oh yes, I am familiar with Autumn Skye, I love her work! And yes, you are exactly right – every plant has its own energy, its own frequency, its own vibration. Ayahuasca has a feminine energy, which is why we call it the Mother. Tobacco has the energy of the Father. Each plant has something unique to impart to us. ●

TO CHECK OUT MORE OF JHEFERSON'S
VISIONARY ART, CHECK OUT
JHEFFAU-ART.COM/VISIONS

TO WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW, SCAN THIS
QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE'S CAMERA!





Witches, Pagans & Heathens, Oh My!

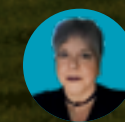
A History of Earth-Centric Spirituality

Words by Kevin Ellerton

PHOTO: PEXELS / JOHN NAIL

No “Earth Issue” of Meditation Magazine could ever be complete without acknowledging the roots of Earth-Centered Spirituality. Many ancient (and prehistoric) cultures worshiped various aspects of Mother Earth, from Rain Gods to Sun Gods to Gaia Herself. Today, Wicca stands out as one of the most popular Earth-Centered spiritual traditions... so we found Paula Woodrum, an actual Witch, to tell us about it!

Kevin Ellerton: You seem like a nice southern lady. How did you get into Wicca?



Paula Woodrum: I was raised Primitive Baptist, in southern West Virginia, which is a very poor part of the United States. A lot of what Wicca is based on, is things that we did when I was growing up. Connecting with Earth. Working the land. My grandmother had a seventy-three acre farm, and orchards, and everything. Everything that we did, and a lot of what we called “superstitions,” were based in pagan, and now Wiccan, principles. So when I started reading about Wicca, it ended up speaking to me, and I haven’t looked back since.

Kevin: It sounds like you accidentally absorbed some Wiccan wisdom as a child. Did your ancestors come from those Wiccan traditions, from Northwestern Europe?

Paula: Well, it would have been pagan traditions. Wicca was actually invented in the 1940s, by Gerald Gardner. Wicca didn’t start coming to the US until the hippie movement in the ‘60s. In the ‘80s it had a big surge, and in the ‘90s, with shows like Charmed and movies like The Craft, at one point, Wicca was the fastest growing religion in the world!

Kevin: Oh wow, I had no idea... I thought Wicca was an ancient religion! Can you tell me more about the history of Wicca, paganism, and Earth-Based Spirituality?

Paula: It’s all based on The Wheel of The Year. All of the “Pagan” traditions started out with the solstices and the equinoxes, as things that they celebrated. There would be fire celebrations and things like that. Those celebrations marked the time of the year. Like, the winter solstice - they knew that the days would start getting longer, and that the sun was returning and coming back. You knew at mid-summer, the summer solstice, that the days were going to start getting shorter, and that the crops would start to come in. At the fall equinox, at Mabon, that’s when your second harvest is! That’s when you’re putting a lot of grain in the stores. It’s based around an agriculture, or agrarian, calendar. And that’s how we got to where we are. But the Heathenry, original pagans, they kind of just stuck with the solstices and the equinoxes. →

“There’s a resurgence going on now in spirituality, in connecting with Earth”

Kevin: So it sounds like Paganism is deeply rooted in the Earth. It’s not just something that pagans cared about... it’s what Paganism was! It was always all about the cycles of the seasons. It’s such a natural kind of spirituality, I’m surprised it hasn’t always been more popular.

Paula: Part of it is, with the Industrial Revolution, we got away from our agrarian roots. The Pagan and the Witch went into the shadows even more than they were before.

We in industrialized countries have gotten away from the origins of where our food comes from. You go into a grocery store, and you just pick stuff out of a case, and you don’t give it a second thought about where it actually came from, to give thanks to whoever grew it, whoever reaped it. There’s a resurgence going on now in spirituality, in connecting with Earth, in remembering where our food came from, getting back to farm-to-table and seasonal availability... we’re becoming more conscious, again,

of where our food comes from. And I think that really helps us all to appreciate what a wonderful ecosphere we have in the Earth.

Kevin: I feel like if paganism had thrived more throughout history, we’d probably be living in a healthier Planet right now.

Paula: Probably so!

Kevin: Do you have any tips for connecting with Earth?

Paula: Just go outside, sit in the sun, and listen. Go hug a tree, and see how you feel. It sounds kinda goofy, but we’re all connected by this energy. There’s a universal flow of energy between us all, and everything that exists, and that has ever existed. When you go outside, still your mind, sit under a tree, put your arms around it, and see what it tells you. Go barefoot in the grass, and you can honestly hear the Earth talk to you... if you just stop and listen. ●

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WATCH THE FULL INTERVIEW



PHOTO: GARY BUTTERFIELD / UNSPLASH

Plant-Based Electric Motorcycles, Made Of Algae and Flax?

Kevin, Jovanna, and Baby Sky go on an adventure to an industrial loft in Brooklyn, where Taras Kravtchouk is building plant-based, meditation-inducing electric motorcycles.

Photos by Ryan Handt & Nirupam Singh

I first met Taras Kravtchouk via FaceTime. It was late in the evening, but Taras was still hanging out in Tarform’s Brooklyn industrial loft, surrounded by futuristic motorcycles in various stages of construction. The stunning backdrop of the sun setting behind the New York City skyline was visible through the windows spanning the full length of the studio. I could see in Taras’ relaxed smile that there was nowhere else he’d rather be.

I’ve been nerding out on electric cars since the ‘90s, when “Tesla” was just an underappreciated historical figure. When Elon sold PayPal and reinvested all his earnings into creating electric cars that were actually cool, I saw a brighter future on the horizon.

I had the same feeling when, while searching for sponsorship partners for MedMag, I stumbled upon

tarform.com. The shape, the style, the trippy visuals on the odometer... they pulled me in and made me want to know more. The fact that these bikes are actually plant-based, and aiming for zero-emission, zero-waste production, is a realized manifestation of my idealistic dreams. So when Taras invited me to come to Brooklyn to see the motorcycles for myself, I made it happen the next day.

Jovanna and I strapped Sky in her carseat and headed excitedly (well, at least I was excited) to Brooklyn. To be fair, Sky did seem to enjoy sitting on the vibrating motorcycles.

Talking to Taras there at the loft, surrounded by futuristic technology, felt like stepping into a scene from Atlas Shrugged, meeting Hank Reardon, making magic, building a better future through industry and alchemy and metallurgy. →



Kevin: I heard that these motorcycles have meditation features, that they vibrate at certain frequencies...

Taras: (Pointing to the body of the bike) You hear the subtle hum? What we try to do is use sound tools to get you into a state of alertness and concentration. When you ride, especially in the city, you're bombarded with sounds. And the traditional internal combustion engine is not a pleasant sound. It's like a rumble. So we thought: because electrical is inherently quiet, is there something we can do to enhance the riding experience? And if we're adding sound to it, why not add sound that gets you into certain states? So this hum that you hear right now is a beta frequency, between 14 to 35 hertz. The idea is to get your mind into a certain state, where you're focused and alert, which we believe enhances your riding experience.

Kevin: So you're basically making riding a motorcycle into a meditation.

Taras: Yes, which it already is! If you ride any bike, you're in a state of complete presence. Because if you're thinking about something else and you're on two wheels, and you're not paying attention, the consequence is not great. Riding a bike forces you to be present. If you're sitting and meditating, for a lot of people it takes time to get into that. On a motorbike, the moment you put on your helmet, you are in a meditative state, whether you want it or not.

Kevin: The trippy visuals on the speedometer was one of the things that made me want to talk to you, because it seems like there's more to your mindset than the standard environmentalist; there's a deeper love and respect for nature and spirituality.

Taras: Totally. A lot of the aesthetics for Tarform come from different mythologies. Greek, Roman, Scandinavian mythology. Paying attention to nature. Trying to figure out: what's the underlying intelligence, in terms of form & geometry? That's something I've been fascinated with for a long time. For example, the key (to turn on the bike) is designed according to the fibonacci sequence.



Every shape in the bike stems from nature, to give more of an organic feel to it. Some of the visuals are obviously psychedelically infused, but even that follows a mathematical algorithm... which I think ancient traditions were more tapped into. In today's technological world, we've kind of forgotten that, where everything is so industrial and optimized for mass manufacturing. I think there's a lot of inspiration to be taken from plants and nature.

Kevin: I've read that your motorcycles are plant-based and made out of flax seed & cactuses. Is that true?

Taras: The seat is plant based and biodegradable, derived from cactus. The black pigment is made from algae. The panels on the sides of the motorcycle are biodegradable and plant based. The body is made of recycled aluminum.

The goal is zero waste, not just zero emissions. There are still some plastics in the current model, but ultimately we want to get rid of petroleum-based products. We want to create a machine that is either completely zero waste, or fully recyclable and biodegradable. How long it's going to take, we don't know. The industry is still early in terms of adopting biomaterials. What we're trying to do is just show people that this is a way of how products should be made. Not just motorcycles, but everything.

Kevin: What's your future vision for Tarform?

Taras: We're starting with bikes, but the big picture is: how can we build beautiful vehicles that do no harm to the environment, across multiple terrains. Electric watercraft would be fun! Electric snowmobiles would be fun... basically, get people closer to nature, enjoy it, respect it, but also enjoy your experience, because there are very few things that offer you such a visceral emotional experience as riding a motorbike. ●

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WHEN MACHINES BECOME PLANT BASED

IF IT'S NOT BEAUTIFUL,
IT'S NOT SUSTAINABLE.
AESTHETIC ATTRACTION IS NOT
A SUPERFICIAL CONCERN,
IT'S AN ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPERATIVE.
BEAUTY COULD SAVE THE PLANET.

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The Earth Interview

Swami Mukundananda

Swami Mukundananda is a world renowned spiritual leader, best selling author, and Vedic scholar.

Written by Phil N. Rossner
Photos courtesy of JK Yog

It is obvious that humanity's critical problems, which includes the degradation of our environment, thereby leading to climate change, cannot be solved strictly through fixes based on technology, as the root of the problem is not solely technological.

As such, it makes sense that if we're going to pull together in order to work towards making positive change in our natural environment and relationships with each other, we need principles and goals that combine to form an inspiring and coherent vision of the future that people everywhere can take to heart, affirm in conversation with each other and then come together in positive relationship in order to reach the common goal.

However, the correct path to take in order to foster positive change in the world is not always clear. The 'way ahead' can easily get derailed when we take into consideration that most of us humans are caught up in a particular view of the world... a worldview which is often emotionally charged, but which seemingly allows us to interpret our circumstances and, subsequently, plan our actions in response, thereby, at least on the face of it, giving our lives a sense of meaning and security. However, from a deeper, spiritually-based worldview, it is apparent that we may be "missing the bus," as it were.

In situations like this, I have always found it extremely helpful to reflect on the wisdom of some of our truly gifted spiritual leaders. I therefore felt greatly blessed when I had the recent opportunity to interview global spiritual leader, Swami Mukundananda

(Swamiji), for this 'Earth' issue of the magazine.

Swamiji was kind enough to impart his profound wisdom in response to my questions, specific to subjects directly related to living on this beautiful planet earth.

In his charming, yet direct, responses, Swamiji gives us what I see as a clear and concise path towards resolution of many of the challenges that we all face globally at this time...

Why 'Mother' Earth?

One question that I put to Swamiji directly was with regard to the challenge of global warming and whether or not he thought we still had a chance of turning things around before the situation becomes irreversible.

Phil: Swamiji, through greed and lack of connection with Mother Earth, humanity is really starting to witness the direct effects of global warming, whether it be flooding, flash fires, extremes of heat, etc. From your perspective, is there a way out?

Swamiji: Yes Phil, modern science has pinpointed a number of solutions. For example, reducing the use of fossil fuel; enhancing the vegetable content in our diet; reducing combustible fuels in our transportation, etc.

However, all of this requires an awareness - a will to implement, and an aspiration to reach the point where we can have a sustainable world. That comes from spirituality - the spiritual traditions of the world which help us rise above the disconnectedness with the world. →

ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK

You very rightly used the term Mother Earth. So why is this concept of Mother Earth in most of the languages of the world? The reason is that it is nourishing us. We are receiving our needs from nature. We call it Mother Nature.

So, at the same time, we have a responsibility towards it. Likewise, spirituality informs us that we are all connected. Now, we have all become aware that in the eco-chain, if one species is eliminated, it disrupts the equality of the whole place.

Over the last two years, we have painfully witnessed how a virus that began in one localized place of the world slowly spread and affected the whole globe. So, to live in this conception that 'I am separated from all of creation' is sheer folly and that is where the spiritual traditions of the world can inspire us to change our perspective - they make us responsible of the fact that we are caretakers of the world that we live in and they help us create an aspiration to pass on a better world to the future generations and develop the will to implement the suggestions that modern science is giving to us to reverse this global climate change.

Is "Peace on Earth" Possible?

Humans have been asking this question over many millennia. Many have lost hope that this aspiration will ever come to fruition. Perhaps, just perhaps, humanity has been trying to solve this issue while still carrying an incorrect perspective?

Phil: Swamiji, a subject that is no doubt on everyone's mind at the moment is world peace. I know it can be a very complex subject, but in basic terms as a species, what do you consider are the reasons why we can't ever seem to get along and live in peace?



Swamiji: Physical conflict is a consequence, and the cause of it is violence and the thoughts that we harbour within ourselves. Now, if we wish there to be peace at large, it must be preceded by peaceful and non-violent thoughts within ourselves. That will happen when our values become properly oriented... when our values tell us that conflict is not worthwhile for satisfying self-interest and those kinds of values will get established with good wisdom. So the link begins from here.

In my tradition, they say that the cause of all misery is ignorance and what dispels it is wisdom. When people are wise, we will have better individuals, which will lead to a better society, which will lead to a better world. That is, we aspire for that day, when such a kind of peace can be ushered into our beautiful world.

Earth's Broad Spectrum of Diverse Cultures

The true beauty of diversity in all aspects of life on this planet is often overlooked and, unfortunately, often causes great division, especially among the 'human family.' Acceptance, along with promotion of an all encompassing unity or, as Thich Nhat Hanh called it - Interbeing - would open a positive path towards bringing about a true state of inclusivity.

Phil: We live on a planet that is beautiful in its diversity, including the diversity of cultures. However, in certain sectors of humanity, diversity is seen as a detriment which has resulted in violent backlashes towards those of different ethnicity. Could you please speak about that and once again impart any thoughts you have towards a solution in this regard?

Swamiji: Unfortunately, the lower human nature is self-centred. It just focuses on I, me and myself. There

used to be a very famous comic strip called Peanuts. So, here's a cartoon that I once read, where Linus tells his sister, Lucy, "Do you know what the geography teacher said? That the world revolves around the sun!" and Lucy said, "Really? I thought it revolves around me!" <laughs> She is depicting our nature, which is so self-centered.

However, the solution in this case is to realize the immense variety in creation where no two trees are exactly alike and no two leaves of a single tree are identical; where all of us have different appearances. Our biometrics are different and our thoughts are definitely different. So, to hope that these differences will be eradicated would be hoping for a world deprived of that variety which provides such richness to this world. These differences need to be respected and we should not feel threatened by them.

Rather, in that diversity, we should see the beautiful unity, the divine consciousness in all forms of life and, within the unity, we should see the wonder of diversity. So if we can have both these perspectives - diversity in the unity and unity in the diversity - that will help us rise above these tendencies towards exclusion and, instead, help develop an inclusive world.

The Wisdom of Meditation for a Troubled World Awareness... leading to inner silence... the opening of a 'divine space' within us and, inevitably, all around us. A better world for all concerned.

Phil: On the subject of meditation, Swamiji, do you subscribe to a specific form of meditation?

Swamiji: In the Hindu lineage there are tens of thousands of styles of meditation. There are as many styles of meditation as there are meditators! So there is such a rich variety, and they can be classified into various schools - there are the schools of Ashtanga yoga, Bhakti yoga and Karma yoga, to name just a few. And within these, there are also varieties of categories. So there are numerous forms of meditation, and there are many sacred texts that have gone into the depth of

these different styles of meditation.

Personally, for myself, I practise and teach a style which is not intent upon merely enhancing the mental focus, but which, at the root of it, creates a divine space in order to evoke the emotions of divinity, of sacredness... and then aligns the mind to peacefully rest itself within that divine space that has been created. This state comes with many benefits!

Naturally, the focus is achieved through practice but, at the same time, the purification of the mind also takes place because the sentiments being cultivated and nurtured... they are divine! It also makes the exercise less mechanical, more fulfilling to the heart and a truly blissful experience. ●

Swami Mukundananda is a world renowned spiritual teacher, author and

founder of the organization JK Yog, which has a firm and active presence on all social media channels, which presently includes 2.43 million YouTube subscribers, 1.5 million followers on Facebook and 240K followers on Instagram.

His latest book, published in 2021, is his acclaimed commentary on the ancient Hindu scripture, Bhagavad Gita - The Song of God.

Through his videos, books, live teachings and retreats, Swamiji continues to touch the hearts and lives of millions of people around the world.



Phil Rossner (aka Avinash Tām) has been a meditation practitioner and teacher for 35 years. His "root" teacher is Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, though he has also learned from many other Buddhist meditation & mindfulness teachers and traditions. Both Phil and his wife are devotees of their Satguru, Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, also known as Amma. Phil is also a video producer, musician, recording artist and writer. He lives with his wife, Ana, and cat, Archie, on Vancouver Island, BC, Canada.

TO VIEW CLIPS FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH SWAMIJI, GO TO MEDITATION MAGAZINE'S OFFICIAL YOUTUBE CHANNEL BY SCANNING THIS QR CODE!



WRITINGS

Wisdom to feed your monkey mind

Shifting Our Cultural Mindset From Colonialism to Connectedness

Isaias Hernandez (better known as “Queer Brown Vegan”) takes us on an inner journey, noting the parts of our collective psyche that have been constructed around colonial mindsets, and outlining three tips for creating lasting change: connecting to Earth, practicing gratitude, and resisting the status quo.

Words by Isaias Hernandez

Around the world, many are collectively realizing the severity of the climate crisis and that human activity has led us here. The result has been chaotic.

Amidst that chaos, there has been a voice, a murmur that has grown into a resounding call. Some of us are listening - what will it tell us?

This voice I’m speaking of, the one that drives my work and resonates with people around the world, is the voice of the people and cultures trampled under colonialism.

Let’s not be abstract: the colonial mindset is one that believes humans are superior to other species. It sees Earth as a place to be conquered. It is at the foundation of white supremacy, environmental degradation, and many more unsustainable practices.

The voices of Indigenous cultures represent another way of life. In one of our world’s biggest cultural stories, we are taught that humanity was banished from a garden and doomed. Now we know

that Indigenous people were still inside - what would their story have told us?

Connecting to Earth will connect us all

The first problem to address in our cultural mindset is our divorce from the natural world. I don’t mean that we should all spend more time in forests (although that’s probably true). I mean that we need to start understanding that our constructed world is the natural world. We have been taught that nature is leafy and green, and something “out there” to be experienced. In reality, nature is all around us. We build cities, termites build mounds; our habitats don’t make us any less of an animal species.

When we begin to understand that it all is nature, we deconstruct the colonial framework that tells us humans and human activity are separate from/superior to nature. It opens up our imaginations: could we have many of the things we do today without drowning the world in concrete? I like to believe it’s possible. But to unlock that understanding, you have to understand our →



Above: Isaias Hernandez (better known as “Queer Brown Vegan”)

ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK

“By focusing on just one problem that you would like to solve in the world, you increase your chances of creating a change”

connection to nature is inherent, just forgotten, driven out of us.

Think of the implications this could have. As a species, we build shelters and exchange resources, much like ants or mycelium. Our fundamental issue is that the lifestyles and businesses of the richest parts of the world cannot be sustained without devastating impacts. We operate more like a cancer, or a virus, than a community. What if we shifted resources to achieve balance, like mycelium? There is so much inspiration to be drawn from the natural world and the future of human culture and society will depend on how accurately we're able to model sustainable practices. It will depend on how closely we can resemble our peers.

However, that will all start with a firm and unshakeable understanding that we are nature. Humans belong here on Earth, just like whales, deer, birds, etc., and humans will not survive without the biodiversity and cycles that have enabled a livable climate for millennia.

Humanity is not the problem - it is the mindset that must be challenged.



Practicing Gratitude

Our environments mean something unique to each of us... what does yours tell you? When we deconstruct our separation from nature and begin to place ourselves within our landscapes, we see ourselves more often.

If you can access green spaces, spend time in them. If green space is inaccessible where you are, focus on your own health (this is always important - providing for nature also means supporting our communities and ourselves).

Zoom in to the small details: examine the flora and fauna all living out their own dramas, in a world of microscopic reactions that resulted in your life. The smallest pieces lead to the largest ones and are all dependent on one another.

Zoom out to the large details: we're on a finite

planet, a space rock if you will, on which complex systems of life have emerged. We are products of both the small and large scale worlds, and as humans, we play an important role in both. We belong.

My gratitude comes from both of these places. In the big picture, I'm grateful for the activists and leaders before me and the long history of life on Earth that we have a chance to protect. Zooming in, I'm grateful for foraging and connecting with nature in small ways.

Lifestyles of Resistance and Reductivism

Here we are. We belong here, we're grateful, we're connected... now what? Research has shown that many that are conscious of climate issues also experience feelings of guilt and shame. Does that sound relatable?

We live within a system where the majority of emissions come from wealthy individuals, yet the biggest climate impacts are experienced in economically deprived regions. On a journey to live more consciously, inequity and the climate crisis have crossed many minds.

Two things are simultaneously true: we did not build these systems. The colonial mindset began to take shape 10,000 years ago and would go on to conquer nearly the entire world and become the foundation of civilization. That's not your fault, and you aren't alone in trying to unlearn it/relearn something new.

At the same time, in the Global North, we actively partake in and uphold systems of oppression, extraction, and exploitation. It is embedded in our purchases, systems, and decisions.

Now is where you decide what this means to you. I'm a dreamer and an idealist but I know that my time and resources are limited. We are all trying to survive and live a life that is in alignment with our values, but our systems have a lot of catching up to do. If understanding how we uphold systems of oppression drives you to flip the proverbial tables and work to dismantle them, that's great! We certainly need that.

However, many of us don't have that luxury. We are bound by roles, norms, and responsibilities, that all too often will say, "this is fine." We are parents, teachers, managers, students, nurses, dentists, and more, all trying to navigate this system.

To that effect, there are two things to consider: reductivism and focus. Can you reduce your reliance on these systems by 10%? By 30%, or 50%? Reductivism has value and is the most common of answers, but often, people want to do more than just buy a metal straw, and I don't blame them, so...

Can you help create a new system? Can you devote your time or build a career around solving a problem and helping others? By focusing on just one problem that you would like to solve in the world, you increase your chances of creating a change. ●



With over 100k followers on Instagram at the tender age of 25, Isaias Hernandez (aka @queerbrownvegan) is a passionate and resounding voice for environmentalism in our social media generation



Communicating With Animals

Connecting animal communication, meditation and ecology

Words by Tanja Mancinelli

My journey in animal communication began a few years ago, as I moved to a new home. The manager of the house had “warned” me about the many stray cats living in that neighbourhood and constantly begging for food. And soon enough, after moving in, I heard a heartbreaking “miaow” outside my door. It came from a tiny and very dirty little cat. Of course, I fed her and Kyra – her new name- quickly became my new flat mate.

We used to cuddle and play a lot. She would always sit next to me, wherever I was. One day, suddenly, she stopped making physical contact with me. Without fail, she would still sit in the same room where I was, but wouldn’t let herself be touched. I wondered why.

Then one night, I had a very vivid dream where I could literally “talk” to Kyra. She explained to me that sometime ago I had touched her inappropriately, which offended her. I sincerely apologized. As I woke up, I wrote the dream in my journal and as soon as I finished, Kyra came to me and started cuddling again! A coincidence? Did she receive my apologies in my dream? Was it, after all, really possible to “talk to animals” the same way Dr. Doolittle did? This event sparked my curiosity about the possibility of communicating with animals.

After studying many books and attending different courses, I am now a trained animal communicator myself and enthusiastic about the ways animal communication can help expand human consciousness.

What is animal communication?

An animal communicator is not to be mistaken with a horse whisperer or animal psychologist, who are able to read the animal’s body language and draw conclusions about the psychology of that animal. Animal communication, or interspecies communication, is an exchange of energy and non-verbal information between a human and non-human animal. This exchange happens on the level of intuition and requires the “human communicator” to be in a state of inner silence and receptivity, in other words, it requires a meditative attitude. In fact, meditation practices not only enhance the ability of communicating with animals but also help to expand our minds and consciousness by showing us through direct experience, that consciousness is everywhere and that we can attune into it. At the same time, animals are great helpers and teachers when it comes to access a meditative state of mind.

Eckhart Tolle, one of the most popular spiritual teachers of our times, often speaks about how animals can help us to become more present in the now. “I call animals Guardians of Beings” says Tolle, “especially animals that live with humans. Because, for many humans, it’s through their contact with animals that they get in touch with that level of being.” Animals are deeply connected with the source of life and, if we are enough open to it, they can transmit this rootedness in Being to us.

But there is another aspect of animal communication which is very dear to my heart. It is my deep conviction that the way we treat and see animals is a direct reflection of the way we perceive nature, the planet and the “others”. In other words, humans treat

the environment the same way they treat animals.

Martin Buber, a prominent Jewish thinker of the 20th century, explored in his work “I and Thou” the meaning of relationships and how relationships can bring us closer to God. According to Buber there are mainly two modes of entering in relationship with the world. The first mode is the “I-It” relationship, where the perceiving “I” collects data about the “other”, analyses it, classifies it, and theorizes about it. The object of experience is then viewed as a thing to be utilized, a thing to be known or put to some purpose. This builds a distance between the experiencing “I” and the experienced “it”. The second mode, which Buber calls “encounter” is the “I-Thou” relationship, where the “I” creates a real connection with and participation in the beingness of the encountered “Thou”. In this kind of relationship, both the “I” and the “Thou” are transformed, are expanded in their consciousness. The “Thou” is encountered in its entirety, not as a sum of its qualities. The “Thou” is not merely a point in space and time, but, instead, it is encountered as if it were the entire universe, or rather, as if the entire universe somehow existed through the “Thou”.

This can happen not only between two humans but between a human and any other agent of life such as a tree, a landscape or, of course, an animal.

However, in our anthropocentric world-view, nature is nothing more than a mere commodity to be used for our purposes. In exactly the same way, except for pets maybe, animals are deprived of their moral worth and degraded to mere objects or even resources. We can see this in industrial animal farming, in laboratory testing or in the destruction of natural habitats and the consequent loss of species and biodiversity. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of the reforming utilitarian school of moral philosophy, stated that when deciding on a being’s rights, “The question is not ‘Can they reason?’ nor ‘Can they talk?’ but ‘Can they suffer?’” For Bentham the capacity for suffering is the central characteristic that gives a being the right to equal consideration. But what if we recognize that animals are closer to humans in terms of feelings, emotions and thinking than we ever thought possible? Would we still happily behave the way we currently do?

The environmental crisis we are facing is, at its root, a spiritual crisis. Nature is seen as a utility, a resource to be used for the benefit of humans. We have lost the capacity to recognize nature as a living, conscious being, as something which is not separated from us but rather interwoven with our very essence. Maybe the destructiveness of humans towards the natural world is sometimes driven by a deep sense of solitude, the feeling of being the only sentient beings in a universe made of dead matter.

Animals and animal communication can help us to restore a healthy relationship with creation by reminding us of the sacredness of all living forms, by showing us that everything is conscious - even if at different levels- and thus worthy of our respect and loving care, and most of all by reminding us of the deep interconnectedness of all living forms, humans included, into a miraculous and mysterious web of existence. ●



In honor of Meditation Magazine's Earth Issue, I thought it would be great to take some time to ponder our place in the beautiful world we find ourselves in. This contemplation is inspired by the great Alan Watts and his brilliant analogy of the apple tree that apples. That sentence may sound a bit strange to those unfamiliar, so let's explore it together.

For most of my life, I never felt connected to the world around me. I lived peering through the rather narrow lens of myself and my day to day challenges and victories. This left me feeling alone and anxious in a large, unfamiliar, and mostly frightening world. I viewed the outside as hostile and out to get me. The harsh elements could hurt me, animals could injure or even kill me and disease could strike at any time. All in all, this perception led me to view the outer world as some obstacle to bear, and possibly overcome somehow (How does one even "overcome" the world? Climbing Mt. Everest? Fighting a bear? Something like

that?). Moreover, it felt like I wasn't even made for this harsh and rugged world.

When meditation entered my life, it began to widen that lens little by little. Sitting and watching the mind helped me realize that I am not my thoughts, and instead, my thoughts are just a small part of what I truly am. This was a realization I could revisit to bring me a sense of peace: there's nothing that has to be done, there is no fight to be had, my mental activity was as natural as a calm stream of water... or on other days a violent storm, but natural nonetheless. The naturalness of my mind brought me a deep sense of relief. Would I go outside and try to stop the rain falling? Of course not. Ruminating on this allowed me to accept myself, as I was, from moment to moment. In other words, even if I wasn't alright, everything was alright, naturally.

As helpful and enlightening as this was, it did not address the alienation and fear I felt from the world

HERE IS A TREE IN THE GARDEN.
IT PRODUCES APPLES, AND WE CALL IT AN APPLE TREE,
BECAUSE THE TREE 'APPLES.' THAT'S WHAT IT DOES.
NOW HERE IS A SOLAR SYSTEM, INSIDE A GALAXY.
AND ONE OF THE PECULIARITIES OF THIS SOLAR SYSTEM IS
THAT, AT LEAST ON THE PLANET EARTH, THE THING 'PEOPLES!'
IN JUST THE SAME WAY THAT AN APPLE TREE APPLES!

- Alan Watts

around me. Enter Alan Watts and his marvelous tale of the tree that apples and the earth that peoples. His words hit me like a freight train and opened my eyes to the fact that I am intimately, in fact inseparably connected to the earth, more deeply than I could have ever imagined.

Alan asks us to imagine for a second we find ourselves gazing at a tree blooming with apples. He has two questions for us: how did those apples get perched up in all the branches, and is there anything wrong that sticks out in this picture? I imagine some may be reading this and think, "Huh, these are some serious tee-ball questions. Well for the first one, the apples didn't get put up there by anyone or anything, they grew straight out of the tree. As for the second question, no, nothing is out of place. It's an apple tree with apples. All is right in the world." To this, Watts would whole-heartedly agree. These are tee-ball questions, the apples did in fact grow straight from the tree, and yes the nature of an apple tree is to have apples, that's what it does!

Let's take this sentiment and apply it to our planet. Is this not the same situation for the Earth and its myriad of living beings, including us? We did not appear here randomly, humans and all other animals weren't premade and inserted into the world like some wild cast of characters. We all grew and evolved right out of this planet. In this way, all life is a direct extension of our planet. I hope it's becoming clear what Watts meant when he said "The Earth peoples". An oddly worded phrase yes, but one that succinctly describes our relationship to our world.

You, just as you are now in this moment, in all your joy, sadness, anger and delight, sitting on your couch, sitting on the subway or sitting in the serenity of the forest, are right where you should be, at home in your natural place. Not only are you right where you should be, you are also intimately connected to the planet you find yourself on in countless ways, it truly defies human understanding. You cannot take so much as a single breath without being deeply intertwined with our planet and the majesty of its systems and cycles. The air you breathe, the water you drink, the wood that builds your house, the electricity that powers

your life, all the way down to the bacteria in your gut. These are just a few of the billions (and I mean billions) of ways you are inseparably connected to our planet in every waking moment.

Compare this to my past self's view of the world. Suddenly, things aren't so frightening. I'm not on some alien planet that's out to get me, I am an extension of a vast, complex, and largely beautiful world. I am not alone in this world, I am surrounded by echelons upon echelons of vibrant life, ranging from my own kind to microscopic organisms and everything in between, all interconnected and dependent upon each other. I am part of some great planetary dance, the scale of which I cannot comprehend but can be awe-inspired by. Without the microbes in my belly, I would cease to exist, and vice versa (When do we ever thank those little guys? Thanks microbes!) But most importantly, what is there to bear and overcome? I don't have to fight the world in any way, I am an extension of it! I am right at home and as I should be, even if my mind says otherwise.

It's liberating to feel effortlessly at home in this majestic and unfathomable process we call life. It also awakens an inner call to appreciate, nurture and protect our environment. The balance of our world requires humanity's cooperation. I hope this volume of Meditation Magazine gives you an opportunity to reflect on Mr. Watts' insights and find a sense of peace, connection and admiration for this magnificent planet and all the beauty it has to offer. Vast oceans, towering mountains, lush forests and an exquisite display of life forms, such as human beings like you and I. We are right where we should be, as natural and evident as an apple on an apple tree. I hope you can find peace in this effortless connection to the Earth. ●



ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK

UNLOCK YOUR AVATAR

Restore the Realm of Earth

Welcome to Inner Realms Journey, where you will discover your Avatar, the integration of all that you are.

Are you rushing through life, overwhelmed, tired, and disconnected?

Are you trying to find meaning so you can finally fill that inner void?

With all the challenges we face, discovering our core essence is a game-changer. Only then can we transform the obstacles in our life into new, creative expressions that deeply align with our true selves. That's the power of your mythical persona - your Avatar.

Your Avatar is the hero of your story. It encapsulates all that you are, empowering you to expand into the greatest version of yourself. It is the realization and fulfillment of all you've been seeking. Your Avatar can manifest as an Elven Wizard with a special connection to the trees, a Faerie Empress that alchemizes dark into light, a Dwarven Warrior King ready to help those in need, a Mermaid Star Shaman prepared to travel the worlds, or whatever else might be waiting within you. Avatars are often inspired by legends, fantasy, and mythology. The possibilities are endless!

INNER REALMS JOURNEY®

Once your Avatar is crystal clear, it will become a new reference point to help you navigate your life's journey. How would your Avatar live life? What choices would it make? What excites and brings out more of your Avatar?

What would happen if you engaged with life through your Avatar self instead of through fears, limitations, and the stories of others? With Inner Realms Journey, your Avatar becomes the foundation for your authenticity, embodiment, and integrity.

Ready to unlock your Avatar?

When you begin our new online meditation platform, Inner Realms Journey, you will be guided through a visualization experience called the "Avatar Activation Journey." This one-hour Journey assists you in activating your Biosuit, the magical framework of energy pathways that connects you with your Avatar. Then, you'll learn how to connect to the Earth Mana Grids, a powerful source of energy within planet Earth. This fuels your Biosuit, allowing you to expand beyond your conscious mind and enter the Inner Realms. Once you arrive in this inner dimension, you'll be guided through a fun magical experience to unlock your Avatar. After you've connected with your Avatar, you'll also create its home Sanctuary. By the end of this experience, you'll be ready to explore the infinite Inner Realms on the Tree of Life!

The Inner Realms are different dimensions that represent aspects of our psyche. Each one contains unique wisdom, landscapes, and beings. Our meditations will guide you through the Realms as your Avatar, which will help you further develop and embody it.

The creation of your Avatar is the key to unlocking passion, joy, and intuition, as well as restoring balance to the Realm of Earth. By living your most empowered self, you inspire that possibility in the world around you.

Start your journey and unlock your Avatar at

www.InnerRealmsJourney.com

Our comprehensive platform includes meditations, trainings, quests, a community, and much more to support your Avatar. We also have complete curriculum programs for kids and teens, and online workshops. The platform has a growing collection of community quests where individuals are inspired to go out and plant trees, clean up community areas, and build conscious relationships with the Earth through applying their Avatar in the real world. A portion of our profits is donated to TreeSisters to fund the restoration of environments, biodiversity, and communities.



SCAN ME



The Magic of Deep Nature Connection

Tamar takes us on a spiritual and emotional journey, into those magical moments of awe, love, and Oneness, that we find within ourselves while immersed in Nature.

Words by Tamar Ellerton

Nature as Home

“The world is full of magic things, patiently waiting for our senses to grow sharper”

W.B. Yeats

When you walk outside the walls of your house is there a sense of coming home?

Eco - or Oikos in Latin - means home and is the basis of words such as Ecology, Eco-system, Ecosophy, even Economy, an indicator from the root of the word that when we talk about nature (at least in English and the Latin languages) it is in reference to our true and ultimate home... the nature, the Earth, that we are born into and will die within.

One of the teachers that helped me truly understand what that core truth of ‘nature as home’ meant is Stephan Harding. During my Master’s studies in Holistic Science at Schumacher College, he brought in the concept of seeing leaving the four walls of your house (or whatever shelter you inhabit) as going ‘inside’, and when you leave the wider nature to go in doors or behind walls you are going ‘outside’.

This simple shift - that by leaving the walls of our human homes we are stepping inside the world of our larger natural home - speaks to a feeling of belonging.

A belonging to the great wide wild Earth, to our Mother Nature, a piece of her and a participant within a larger system where everything is family.

Think of what home means to you, the shelter, the place of being nurtured and raised, the family dynamics, the feelings, the love and also the pains. The complexity of these relationships is part of what makes us who we are. It can be the same to be in relationship with our more-than-human world of nature and the entire web of life.

There is a magic that comes with knowing the world, in being with it, turned on and aware of what is there and participating in connection. As Yeats says, this magic is always waiting for us, there already, available when we let our senses grow sharp enough to see and feel it. The magic arrives in these moments of knowing, in the intimacy of relating and it is through this connection that we come alive to a greater knowing of ourselves and the whole that we are a part of. ●

PHOTO: DAVID MARCU / UNSPLASH

The Magic of Knowing the World

“What is magic? In the deepest sense, magic is an experience. It’s the experience of finding oneself alive within a world that is itself alive. It is the experience of contact and communication between oneself and something that is profoundly different from oneself: a swallow, a frog, a spider weaving its web.”

David Abram

The magic I speak of is that of the most natural kind, one that cannot be super natural as it comes out of nature being nature. The magic that comes out of us as humans experiencing the wonder and awe of being alive and awake in an animate world.

The magic of deep nature connection is found in the moments sitting around a crackling fire under the stars, floating in a river as the fish swim all around you, lying under an old oak tree curled up in its protruding roots, or in singing with the birds flying in the wind. It is the essence of tapping into the deep truth of who we are and how we are in relationship to all that is around.

To explore the magic one must get to know the world. Knowing not in the sense of understanding every last detail of the whys, the whats, and the hows, but in the sense of knowing in intimacy. As a mother knows a child, as a spouse knows their partner, or a friend knows their best buddy.

Each relationship, each moment of connection enlivens a part of our being, awakens a kind of

magic. Each relationship is unique and adds to our wholeness. There is no one kind of connection but rather a multitude of ways of relating. As diverse as nature herself.

Whether connection with nature was part of the culture you were raised into, this relationship can be consciously cultivated at any time, in any place, for anyone. It is available for all, no matter where you are from, your background, the color of your skin, or your current state or circumstances.

So how do you deepen connection to the Earth? How do you come into a conscious relationship with the more-than-human world? (Assuming that deep connection is not already lived and experienced fully.)

Just like deepening connection in any realm, whether to a person, place, or thing there must be time spent with and a sense of relationship. A give and take, a participation with that which is there - whether blissful or painful, a giving of space and time for the experience to emerge and unfold and for the aliveness to find you. ●

Finding Our Way Home

“We are our world knowing itself. We can relinquish our separateness. We can come home again - and participate in our world in a richer, more responsible and poignantly beautiful way than before...”

Joanna Macy

You don’t need to go off to a far away place with stunning and majestic vistas or waterfalls and volcanoes to feel the awe and magic of deep nature connection - though that can be wonderful and profound. In the end what can be the more profound shift is for us to connect with the Earth right where we are. We can each go outside - or ‘inside’ - to the world right beyond our doors to find the magic in the everyday. To get to know our larger homes - our ‘eco’ home.

There are endless practices to get to know nature on a more intimate level. Each of us can find what speaks to our heart the most and what brings the magic of life alive for us to see and feel.

Here are just a few suggestions to bring a deeper connection into the everyday:

You can take walks without an end goal of where you want to go. Let yourself be drawn to a plant or a flower and observe, or sit by a stream, or look into the eyes of a squirrel or a bee. Saunter through your town or your city, your village or local forest and find different paths and new details everyday.

You can also pick a spot to visit daily or as often as you can, whether in your backyard or in your local park, or a wild place that you can find your nook to get to know. Go everyday, make a commitment to this place, find out its daily cycles and the creatures that live there. See how it changes over the seasons and how the spot changes you.

You can also find a plant to draw, or a tree to sing to, or a moon lit night to dance with yourself and the nature all around. Use the art and expression of your own being to participate in relationship with where you are. Give your beauty to the world and the world will give its beauty to you.

You can also invite ceremony into your interactions, calling on your connection to the sacred (in whatever way that means to you) with your intentions. Set the space for your being to connect. Draw on the elements of fire, air, water and earth - feel them in your body and see them all around. Practice gratitude and appreciation for being alive and for all life.

Everything is alive, has sentience, and intelligence. Each being with inherent value, beauty, and life force. This is a call for us to step into connection with all that is so that we can support each other through the difficulties and find our way into right relationship with all

that we are connected to. In doing so we are able to move in harmony, to choose a path that is nourishing, and learn to receive the gifts of the world and give back in service to the greater whole we are a part of.

We are part of a great web of life, it is very much alive and waiting for us to notice. So go ahead, connect, experience and tap into all the magic of all that is already here! Mother Earth is waiting for you to come home. ●



PHOTOS: PEXELS

Why the World Needs Holistic Science

Words By Stephan Harding

Modern science has given us huge benefits – just think of the astonishing medical advances of recent times and also of the deeply inspiring knowledge that science has given us about the evolution of life and indeed of the universe itself. But just like everything else, science also evolves, and is now in need of a new evolutionary push forward into a much wider approach that can help us better understand and solve the huge global crises we now face.

Science as we know it came to prominence in the 16th and 17th centuries at a time when the 30 year's war (1618-1648) – a religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics - had ravaged much of Central Europe. Plagues and famines added to the sense that nature was dangerous, unpredictable and oppressive. Given those circumstances, it is not surprising that some of the great minds of the day wanted to find a way of knowing and relating to the world (both human and other than human) that would bridge the gap between the two spheres of Christendom whilst also providing predictability, power and control over nature. These great thinkers (Galileo, Descartes and Newton, to name just a few) developed a way of knowing which we now

know as 'science' based on the view that nature is a vast lifeless machine which can in principle be predicted and controlled by means of carefully designed experiments and mathematical modelling of any aspect of the world machine reduced to its component parts.

This mechanistic model of nature was appropriate for those times and worked extremely well until the early 20th century when major advances in physics (in quantum and relativity theories) revealed huge flaws in the model. Furthermore, by the mid-20th century the mechanistic view of nature had affected (perhaps better to say 'infected') every sphere of life, including economics, education and agriculture with its emphasis on pure quantities in service of human exploitation and dominance over nature, thereby contributing to our current 'triple crisis' of climate change, species extinction and social disruption.

We are now in the situation of facing a 21st century global crisis of massive proportions with a mostly outdated 17th century scientific understanding of nature which is no longer fit for purpose and which has now become immensely limiting and even

dangerous. So how can science evolve so as to be made fit for our times?

Strangely enough, the answer seems to involve the integration of an ancient pre-scientific idea with advances in leading edge mainstream sciences such as chaos and complexity theories and James Lovelock's Gaia theory.

The ancient idea is that nature is best understood as a great living being –as a cosmic organism – as a great soul or psyche - rather than as a dead cosmic machine. Holistic science helps us to realise that like any living being (including the human being), nature has qualities that cannot be fully appreciated using classical quantitative scientific approaches.

The qualities in nature, which are largely ignored and rejected in mainstream science with its emphasis on reason; we perceive aesthetically, poetically and intuitively. We can develop the ability to appreciate the wholesome communicative power of the colours, shapes, sounds and indeed the pure existential 'feel' of the natural world as it presents itself to us directly to our senses before thinking steps in to generate theories about how it functions and has come into being. The qualities bring us into a place of a deep, humble respect

for the otherness and intrinsic value of nature, helping us to restrain our impulse to dominate and control, to be the 'top' species on this planet.

Our ability to perceive qualities needs to be cultivated just as much as our rational quantitative skills if we are to develop a science fit for the 21st century. In holistic science we draw on the methods developed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) for cultivating our perceptions of qualities through our sensing and intuition. We practice with plants, colours, stones, with the very soil itself, for as Goethe once said, the most difficult thing is to be able to deeply see what is most near at hand.

When we integrate an awareness of qualities and quantities we develop an expanded science which not only makes us clever, but which also makes us wise. We use the mechanistic-quantitative approach as a tool for exploring and solving certain problems when it is appropriate to do so, but always remembering that our appreciation of qualities gives us a truer image of nature. In this expanded, holistic science we are no longer the masters and controllers of nature, but rather deeply respectful, humble participants in the creative evolution of our universe. ●

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

FROM COLLECTIVE CHAOS TO COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS



ANXIETY FREEDOM TECHNIQUE

A simple tool that can help humanity break free from the insanity one person at a time.

With global stress at an all time high, sometimes it feels like the world is in a state of chaos. Our subconscious fears often perpetuate the reality we're trying to escape. As more people express and clear away these fears, we elevate collectively.

I created the **Anxiety Freedom Technique** (A.F.T.) in 2020 to help healthcare workers face a tsunami of stress. First, you express the core fears fueling your anxiety. Next, you release the tension from your body. Finally, you integrate the changes with relaxing breathwork.

1 EXPRESS YOUR CORE EMOTIONS

Rate your anxiety from 1 - 10: ____

A. Right now I feel totally overwhelmed by (list everything that is upsetting you):

B. The most upsetting situation from the above list is:

C. My biggest fear about that is:

D. Right now I feel tension in my (e.g. stomach, chest, throat, etc)

E. Instead of anxiety I want to feel (e.g. comfort, peace, happiness, etc):

2 FILL IN YOUR FREEDOM STATEMENT

Enter your answers from **SECTION 1** where prompted below:

I want to completely break free from the fear of

(insert answer from **C**)

I unlock and release all the tension from my

(insert answer from **D**)

I refill that space with

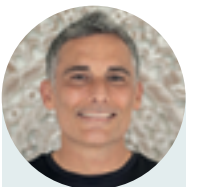
(insert answer **E**) right now!

3 BREATH AND RELEASE

1. Touch your body where you feel the most tension.
2. Slowly read your Freedom Statement aloud 3 times.
3. For 3-minutes breathe deep and slow silently saying, "I'm OK".

Rate your anxiety from 1 - 10: ____

Now try this meditation: Breathe deep and slow, embracing tension with your breath, and softly letting go. Feel the airflow into your chest, as inner peace widens with every breath. Follow the airflow into your heart, releasing tension from every part. Breathing life-force, directly from source. Radiating light from deep within, bathing every cell, from your center through your skin. Align with the sun, see a beam of light melt down tension in everyone.



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 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

MAGICAL MOMENTS with Brad Wanik

Brad is an avid photographer, meditator, and MedMag reader. He takes his photos with love and reverence for Mother Nature, Planet Earth, and our beautiful Universe.

“I went kayaking on Renssaler Lake. The shore was littered with trash and bottles & cans, so I didn’t expect to see any wildlife. Then I looked to my left and saw these twelve beautiful ducks in a row. I’ve never seen ducks in a row like that, let alone twelve of them! I was blown away. I remember thinking: “I am so fortunate to have something like this shown to me!”

“I’ve
seen a lot of
woodchucks, but I
never saw baby woodchucks!
When I saw these, I was
surprised and amazed. They
were so cute. As I watched
them there in the grass, I
felt something close to
love.”



“I heard a single
“whooh!” I looked up, and
there it was. Wow, I can’t believe
I’m seeing this! I was grateful to
the owl for letting me know it was
there. It was starting to get dark,
so I asked it to stay there for a
moment, while I went to
get my camera.”

“One of the things I love most about being a
photographer and spending time in nature, is
that I get to see things that most people never
see, and I get to share those experiences with
others through the lens of my camera.”

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AND NATURE INTO YOUR HOME
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WITH YOUR PHONE’S CAMERA!
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ELEPHANT CORNER

We are considering a partnership with Elephant Journal, one of the largest online mindful lifestyle publications. Here are some of their stories. Let us know what you think!

Elephant Journal is one of the largest mindful lifestyle publications online.

For decades, Waylon Lewis and his army of authors have been spreading consciousness on subjects like meditation, emotional intelligence, and eco awareness, through edgy and often intensely personal articles.

Now you might be thinking: “Hmm... it sounds like Elephant Journal has a lot in common with Meditation Magazine!” And yes, we agree. We are on the same mission: to make the world a happier place through meditation, activism, and awareness.

For these reasons, we have been talking with Waylon about a possible partnership between our companies! We would share articles and resources, and grow together into the future, for the benefit of all.

But before we take that massive, ginormous, elephantine step, we wanted to give you a peek into the heart of the Elephant... by sharing a few of the best Mindfulness-of-Nature articles from Elephant’s Editorial Team.

LEARN MORE (AND LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK) ABOUT THE MEDMAG X ELEPHANT PARTNERSHIP IDEA BY SCANNING THE QR CODE!



How Far Do I Have To Hike To Notice My Own Happiness?

We often search for happiness in the outside world. Instead, let us take a long hike into the natural beauty of our own souls.

Words by Josie Myers,
Editor @ Elephant Journal

Hiking remote trails in Virginia was a welcome alternative to the entertainment value of watching Florida Man try to parallel park.

I fled the Jersey Shore on one of the busiest weekends of the tourist season. My neighborhood would be teeming with visitors during Labor Day weekend, and home was not where I wanted to be at this time.

We started at the visitors center at the Peaks of Otter, in southwestern Virginia, one of the sites in Teddy Roosevelt’s ambitious National Parks Service project. The tidy, organized signage reminded me of Massimo Vignelli from a graphic design class. After selecting a trail with a waterfall and a rating of “moderate,” off we went.

The trail had two choices, hikers could either take the shorter but steeper incline to go straight to the waterfall or take the entire loop. The instructions at the visitors center had cautionary advice for this trail that was just a bit under two miles. “This trail drops 260 feet below

the Fallingwater Trail Parking Area and hikers should be prepared to climb that elevation on their return.” The steep incline was to be particularly challenging — I hadn’t done anything more strenuous than a vacuuming marathon since the pandemic started.

We daringly decided to take the entire loop, the gravel path from the parking lot led to the full trail. The shady canopy of trees quickly removed us from the rest of the world as we hiked to the ever-louder sound of falling water. I sat on a flat rock to pull out my phone and take some pictures and I had one of those Kurt Vonnegut moments.

“And I urge you to please notice when you are happy, and exclaim or murmur or think at some point, ‘If this isn’t nice, I don’t know what is.’” ~ Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

The quote reminds me of our tendencies to take for granted the wonderfulness around us. I took a breath of the clean forest air and felt the cool breeze through the trees. I also noticed that this path, the longer path, the one that is harder and not completely necessary to get to the waterfall, was missing any signs that people had ever been here.

It reminded me of George, a guy who painted our house once. He finished, gave instructions on post-painting maintenance, how to do touch ups, and he said, “I worked hard on this, don’t sh*t it up.” I can’t explain the joy I felt that this path was too difficult for careless travelers to trek and ruin.

I was thinking of the plants growing beneath the trees, the leaves crunching beneath my feet, and the butterflies that occasionally crossed my path. No one had posted this all over Instagram, driving foot traffic of unaware travelers through the delicate ecosystem. Although it was a marked footpath, it was still pristine, the water clean, the land uncluttered.

Before the photos and the videos were taken, I sat and contemplated the wonderfulness of the moment. I wasn’t scoping out something to share, or trying to capture this hike for later. I was experiencing it in the now. I closed my eyes and sat with the enormity of the forest, distilled into a two-mile trail.

If this isn’t nice, I don’t know what is.

I have Vonnegut moments when I clean up my flower bed, trimming back the plants and remembering that this was a good year for them, with pesto cubes in the freezer to document my harvest. I have a moment when I write up my end-of-year statistics at work, knowing what we accomplished in the community. When I stop to sit—and notice my own happiness, I find that these moments were there the whole time, waiting for me. ●

ILLUSTRATIONS: FREEPIK

The Cheapest Way Toward More Mindfulness: Walking Barefoot.

The pleasures (and pains) of being
an actual barefoot hippie.

Words by Robert Busch, Editor @ Elephant Journal

Are you interested in a free foot
massage, more mindfulness, and getting
out of your head?

I remember meeting one of my best friends for the first time. We had to share an apartment during a yoga teacher training. After moving in, I asked him, “Where are your shoes?” He just laughed and said, “I don’t like shoes.”

It sounded weird, but besides that, he seemed to be a pretty cool dude, so I asked him what that was all about.

“Take a look at your shoes, and then take a look at your feet—it doesn’t match, right?” was his introduction to the most profound thing I learned at the beginning of my yoga and mindfulness journey.

It was my first yoga teacher training, but he was already an experienced teacher. I specifically liked his approach of practicing yoga that wasn’t based on buying every spiritual gadget available. Walking barefoot doesn’t cost anything.

While our fellow yoga students booked massages, drank overpriced smoothies, and hired folks to give them astrology readings, Jesse inspired me to take the barefoot approach (which is not only about walking barefoot—it’s a way of life).

Walking barefoot doesn’t come without risks, and we are likely to hurt our feet along the way—just as a fair warning before we dive into the benefits of it.

The three main benefits of walking barefoot
1. Free foot massage

As mentioned in the intro, walking barefoot literally massages our feet. The Harvard Medical School claims on their website that “regular massage improves circulation, stimulates muscles, reduces tension, often eases pain.” And of course, that is the effect of a good old foot massage, but when we walk barefoot, we get

the same effect for free. Think about a reflexology foot chart and then think about all the sensations we receive when walking barefoot—it’s pretty much self-explanatory.

2. More mindfulness

When walking barefoot, we need to watch our steps. The main reason humans started wearing shoes was to protect our feet from rocks, sticks, and other things that could hurt us.

Walking meditation is one of the easiest and most accessible ways to combat anxiety.

Especially when we struggle with traditional meditation, barefoot walking can be our gateway drug toward more mindfulness.

Watching every step that we take might feel weird in the beginning, but it’s worth trying. Once we establish a mindful way of walking, we immediately feel the positive effects of slowing down.

3. Getting out of our heads

Many of us, including myself, struggle with overthinking every single aspect of our lives, which often causes headaches, anxiety, and insomnia—or other symptoms showing us that we are caught up in our heads.

Feeling our body takes us out of our heads. This can be achieved by exercising, touching, and getting touched—or walking barefoot.

The sensation of stepping on a tiny, little rock might not always be convenient, but it literally shifts our awareness from our mind to our feet. While walking barefoot, we open ourselves to connecting to nature on a deeper level—and yes, sometimes it hurts a little.

I remember the first years of teaching yoga at gyms in Germany. As a yoga teacher, you don’t need specific shoes to teach, so I made it a thing to always

show up barefoot—even in winter when students showed up in their fancy “yoga socks.”

People laughed at me and called me the barefoot guy. As my friend Jesse still had his “Barefoot Wisdom” project going, I decided to represent this idea to my German students.

Outside the gym, reactions were even more intense. Folks weren’t laughing about me walking barefoot; they called me stupid. “Adults have to wear shoes. Grow up!” was something I heard a lot.

When I lived in Morocco, I continued to walk barefoot. A good friend visited me with his family, and I accidentally started a little drama. “Why does Robert not have to wear shoes?” asked my friend’s daughter when she saw me walking barefoot on the streets. My friend (obviously) didn’t have an answer to that.

In Costa Rica, my landlord always asked me, “How can you walk on these rocks without any shoes?” My answer to that was, “It takes some practice, bro.”

It’s almost funny how we consider walking in shoes normal and get confused when we see someone walking barefoot. Especially the ladies reading this article know this struggle too well. Who has never complained about the discomfort of wearing high heels? Anyone having a hammertoe?

Shoes are supporting our feet, but maybe our feet don’t need all that support? I would even go further and say, “Shoes make our feet needier.” If walking

barefoot for longer than 10 minutes causes pain in our knees or hips, then it might be a sign that the muscles of our feet need some workout.

Our feet literally carry the weight of our whole body, distribute impacts of walking, and are essential to our sense of balance—enough reasons to take good care of them.

Last week, I had a cramp while running, and the pain lasted for a few days. I wasn’t able to run this weekend, so I went for two extended barefoot walks. My calf muscle feels much better by now—but even more important: it reminded me of the power of walking barefoot.

When I was living in Costa Rica, I was barely wearing shoes (maybe flip-flops when going to a restaurant), but since my return to Germany, I even wore shoes in the garden—and started getting headaches, anxiety, and insomnia again.

I know that walking barefoot isn’t a cure for everything, but it is easy to do and doesn’t cost a thing. Before you get started and say goodbye to your shoes, keep in mind that this is a practice. As with every practice, there is no point in overdoing it at the beginning. Start by taking your shoes off for a few minutes during a walk and see how it feels.

And one last tip for those of you that might be worried about getting your feet dirty—they are made for that, and you can wash them after your walk. ●





8 Simple Ways to Prove our Love to Mother Earth

Easy tips for living a greener, more eco-friendly life.

Words by Elyane Youssef, Editor @ Elephant Journal

Our earth is suffering—that’s the ugly truth. And, let’s be clear, it’s because of us. We have taken our planet for granted. We have taken into consideration our own time on Earth, disregarding the generations to come and the struggle that our planet will have to endure for billions of years.

Who cares about what happens after we die, right? Well, it’s time to care. The consequences of our reckless actions are manifesting around us each day. We don’t need to look somewhere special to discern the damage that we have done. It’s enough to observe the alarming change of the weather worldwide, the increasing number of natural disasters, and

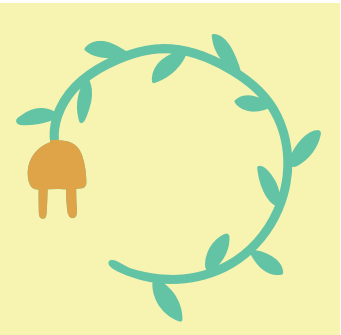
the plastic that’s hideously lurking everywhere. There are big things we can do to contribute to making our planet better. But, since the majority of us lead busy lives and barely have time for ourselves, we can prompt a change through taking small actions that require little time. What is required, however, are two things: willingness and action. We all love nature—or at least it seems that way from our social media accounts. We strike a yoga pose in front of giant mountains or on beautiful beaches, and we share quotes about the majesty of trees and the joy of fresh air. Nonetheless, true love is translated through actions. Here are eight simple ways we can prove to Mother Earth that we love her:

1. Educate, educate, educate.
Educating others (especially the ones who seem oblivious to environmental problems) and our children about the environment is the most important thing we can do. Young people, in particular, should be aware of their role in the survival of our planet. Some of us are idle when it comes to taking action, but so many others are ignorant about what’s actually happening on Earth. This is why spreading the word and educating others, whether through social media or community involvement, is essential.

2. Why not recycle or re-use?
A variety of things that we throw away can be recycled or re-used. This is why we must think twice before dumping something forever. Pause for a moment before throwing something away and unleash the artist inside you.

3. Remember what the Dalai Lama said.
“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive.” Love isn’t limited to humans and four-legged creatures. Nature has existed for billions of years—way before our species came to life. This is why we must respect it, be compassionate, and show some love. Go on hikes, meditate outdoors, hug more trees (no, it’s not hippie nonsense—trees love it).

4. The fewer the cars, the merrier the atmosphere.
Walk, ride a bike, carpool. When we walk, we’re burning calories and polluting less. Awesome, right? Have a bike? Great, work those hamstrings! Also, carpooling is your chance to socialize. And, if you have to drive, drive slower—you’ll reduce the fuel consumption.



5. Remember the word “plastic” the way you remember your own name.
Every day think, “How can I reduce my usage of plastic?” Here are some ideas: get refillable bottles instead of plastic ones, choose cardboard, bring your own eco-friendly shopping bags with you to the market, and never use plastic straws.

6. Two more phrases to remember: unplug and turn off.
Unplug any technology you’re not using in your office or home, and turn off the lights in rooms when you’re not in them. It’s that easy.

7. Listen when the water screams, “Save me!”
When brushing your teeth, scrubbing your body, or scraping the dirty dishes, turn off the tap. Every time we turn off the tap when we don’t need it, we’re saving water.

8. Shop consciously.
Our choices in the market matter. Through consuming and buying only what we need, we help the earth more than we can imagine. And when we do buy things, let’s try and choose eco-friendly goods made in sustainable ways. ●

ADVENTURES

Travel & adventures that excite the soul



SURFEING THE SKIES

Join world-champion skysurfer Keith “Kēbē” Snyder, on his whirlwind journey from Father Sky to Mother Earth. Spinning upside down over the Pyramids of Giza, peering in awe into our favorite airbender, takes us on a poetic, meditative, inspiring, and almost completely intelligible adventure into his mystical mindstream in this magical moment.

Photos by
Ioannis Vlachiotis
and Bruno Brokken



Counterclockwise from top: riding up to altitude in a C130 above Egypt; jumping out of the tailgate; inverting; spinning



My parents started calling me Kēbē at nine months old, and I am a skysurfer. A serendipitous trek of sky and sea has helped me understand my higher power connection to the Universe. Musical Key B (Kēbē) also happens to be associated with the crown chakra.

Traversing a glassy ocean is one of the best ways to see flying fish. Doing so as a merchant marine engineering student afforded me a unique viewpoint. To see a levant cloud around the Rock of Gibraltar while a pod of porpoises escorted us to the ocean feels as supernatural as glimpsing the spires of Istanbul from the water.

A magnetism to the sky led me to pursue the sporting art of skysurfing. Instantly I felt a mission of escorting a higher self down to Earth.

Surfing the skies has given me a bird's eye view of the architecture of Vienna and the peaks of the snow laden Alps. Skysurfing above Sonoma, with San Francisco at the horizon's edge of shining waters, was nothing less than surreal.

In the sporting art of skysurfing, inverted spinning is called the helicopter.

There is a feminine energy flow that I feel while inverted-spinning (spinning upside down while falling through the sky with a surfboard strapped to my feet). As I have gone further down this path, there is a growing understanding of a vast and supportive feminine Universe.

Spinning in the Arizona sky brings an air of openness, as one can see the snow capped mountains, while the night sky yields great clarity of star systems.

Often I've experienced mental chitter chatter on the way to altitude. Repeating mantras helps that to subside.

One of the greatest facts I have learned about our physiology is about the vagus nerve. Breathing deeply stimulates the vagus nerve which has a bioelectric



thoughts can give purpose to doubtful thoughts.

Spinning myself free of negativity started to develop into a pattern, so I began to analyze further. Winning arguments with doubtful thoughts can become a normalcy. Doubtful people exist. There is no need to manifest doubt. Fighting fear only feeds fear. Breathe deep. Silence the rumination.

For decades I had been breathing superficially on the ride to altitude. Deeper breathing began only in recent years. I noticed inconsistencies in my performance when I did not practice breathing deeply.

Consistent practice over time develops the vagal tone of the vagus nerve that runs throughout the body connected to all of the major organs. The further pursuit of understanding the light that I am (we are)

has become my raison d'être. Cultivating the right attitude allows me to operate the human airframe that I am and channel a more resonant Kēbē to Earth. When I operate in a sound state of mind, the spinning torus of energy that I am flows more naturally. When light energy flows through me more efficiently, a natural channeling of higher light of the Universe occurs. With right mindfulness, a relationship with higher intelligence develops.

Operating in accord with higher intelligence on a regular basis assists in creating a more peaceful Earth. True higher intelligence is unconditional love. True higher intelligence does not desire to conquer nations or women. True higher intelligence is the harmonious accord of coexistence. The greater →

"Spinning myself free of negativity"



good of the Universe and intelligence that cares about us is able to be channeled to Earth.

A time arose when I had not been setting aside time to meditate. Overextending myself became normal. Exhausted, I ended up in the Toltec desert, living in a trailer under a tree, where challenging experiences transformed into meaningful understanding. The dog Stella, who found me in Savannah, chased rabbits under the Sirius star of Canis Major & Lepus. The synchronous accord of the dog star chasing the rabbit, just as the story of the constellations, ignited laughter as we continued to sit, walking with Sirius and the countless star systems.

Knowing a star kinship with the Universe, I do not see a dark sky. What I see is infinite and ever-multiplying angles of the source light of the Universe. Together, Stella and I realized the unique effectiveness of flying with the fifth-dimensional awareness over the Pyramids, with the specific intention of reinitializing a flower of life energy at the core of Earth.

After sitting more with the Universe, I began stepping out of meditation realizing, ‘I know what I have to do’ along with, ‘how it is going to happen exactly remains a mystery.’ Stella and I gladly accepted this higher path and welcomed the challenge.

Writing an article on skysurfing was difficult, as some mental faculties had been stressed. Yet as completion neared, a gifted invite arose from a friend, to skysurf over the Pyramids of Egypt along with an Australian big wave surfer/snowboarder who wanted to learn to skysurf.

Realizing that I happened to be addressing an age-old matter of Earth’s disconnect from the Universe that occurred along the way in some confusion between understandings of the third and fifth dimension, the importance of spinning over the Pyramids grew.

A friend allowed me to use his vehicle so that I could make it to a local gym and Yoga class, when the most devastating news struck. My father had Glioblastoma, an extremely aggressive brain cancer. He was rushed to surgery, and several growths were removed. Arriving after surgery, I was fortunate enough to help my father’s spirits by sharing a humorous story while introducing him to porpoise song, Tibetan bowls, and healing frequencies.

Returning to Arizona to teach the Aussie to skysurf safely was rhythmic. Using Om Mani Padme Hum as my mantra that month helped my strength, and helped me to rise to frequency with the clarity I sought. The pursuit of happiness is a pursuit of higher frequency.

In attaining fifth dimensional frequency levels, a



knowing arises. We are all one family of the prismatic magnificence of crystalline light beings, and as one of the family of light beings, I am one with my mind and body.

Frequency and dimension rise occur as light flow increases when I spin. Inner communication experiences have allowed me to understand that others are able to “see” me as I am skysurfing, as well as to “hear” my music. As I was singing with The Doors to an electronic version of “Break On Through,” I could hear what I am understanding as my team of observers throughout the Universe cheering: “We love us.”

Bringing strength and peace home to my father, we managed to laugh every day, making the most of our moments together despite the canceled dream of Egypt due to coronavirus. Instead we focused on checking out his extensive modeling project, introducing him to the guitar and Bob Marley’s ‘Three Little Birds’, tending to his Koi and working on his ability to walk. Watching his steps improve while he walked to a tree flower and exclaimed “how beautiful” is something for which I will always be grateful. After his departure, I walked by a little bridge he had constructed from my mother and

Counterclockwise from left: Skysurfing above the pyramids; falling above the clouds; surfing above Egypt; Stella in goggles.



father’s wedding picture. I had recently repaired this bridge and heard, “Did you just think of me crossing the bridge?” The higher light we are is the construct of the higher dimensions of us.

Meditation after my father’s departure led to picking up my board and heading to Orange, Virginia so I could feel the sky while looking at the Shenandoah mountains and forests of Virginia. One of the fly tribes managed to capture one of my spins on video, which I entered into an online contest and won. The video allowed Guinness World Records to review and open their books to my 2021 attempt. While learning of the synchronicity of the winter solstice of 2020 marking the shift from Age of Pisces to Age of Aquarius, I was again invited to the great Pyramids of Egypt.

During the 2021 practice spinning series in Orange,

Virginia, I encountered a month of speed wobbles. My meditative practice had waned and an imbalance grew. It was time to build a more formal meditative visualization sequence while spinning.

There exists a center of the spin along with a flow of energy similar to that aware state that exists in a dream, only higher. Visualizing sequences of rings, spheres and platonic solids above and below while spinning has helped me to hold a centerline and feel that flow of light we are more profoundly.

In recent years the accuracy of GPS coordinates of Earth has developed. Flying through the Great Pyramid’s longitudinal GPS digits (which are identical to the speed of light) has assisted my inner battles transform into a ballet. Christ, Krishna & Kulkán consciousness, crystalline being awareness & Age of Aquarius are all synergistic of the fifth dimension Universe... all channels of koruna and of uma. These are expressions for unconditional love and light.

My discovery of the Emerald Tablets was naturally unnatural, as there were moments of feeling I had stepped back in time, into the future, and then back in the present moment all within one turn of my head.

On November 1st, 2021, ‘Just Breathe’ played while I walked to the Hercules aircraft carrying a board made to represent the Emerald Tablets. →

“It was time to build a more formal meditative visualization sequence while spinning”

**"A serendipitous trek of sky and sea
has helped me understand my higher
power connection to the Universe"**



At 11:11, we rose to altitude above the arid Northern plains of Africa, as the powerful riff of ‘Stardog Champion’ echoed through my soul. Visions of my brother finishing the USMC Marathon he had run the day before in honor of my father led to a wave of emotions as the tailgate lowered. Knowing not if I would burst into tears as ‘Unthought Known’ began, I was slid into place at the tailgate’s edge of the C130.

All I saw were ripples of vast desert. A hand raised, signaling us to exit. We launched from Hercules. The blast of air hit the underside of the board. I felt lift, flipped inverted, accelerated through 160 revolutions, reached 222 RPMs. As my parachute opened, I saw the Necropolis and Pyramids of Giza from a mile high. I landed by the Great Pyramids of Giza and into the Guinness World Record Books for “most helicopter spins while skysurfing.” An indescribable level of gratitude exists for the Universal convergence effect of future meeting past.

In 2022, I will be pushing further in efforts to raise higher dimensional awareness, along with raising awareness of a new technique & technology utilized to treat cancer. The treatment, called histotripsy, non-invasively focuses ultrasound waves to mechanically destroy target tissue with millimeter precision. While it is my job to spin faster in pursuit of higher dimensions, the Focused Ultrasound Foundation is gratefully accepting financial assistance for their treatments, along with trial patients for varying cancer & brain disorders, including mental illness. fusfoundation.org ●

AFTER WINNING MULTIPLE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THE USA, KEBÉ NOW HOLDS THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR MOST HELICOPTER SPINS WHILE SKYSURFING (160 REVOLUTIONS). SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH THE EPIC VIDEO!



Clockwise from left: Kébē holding his Guinness World Record certificate; skysurfing over Egypt, inverted spinning (helicopter) over Egypt; riding a camel by the Pyramids.

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