

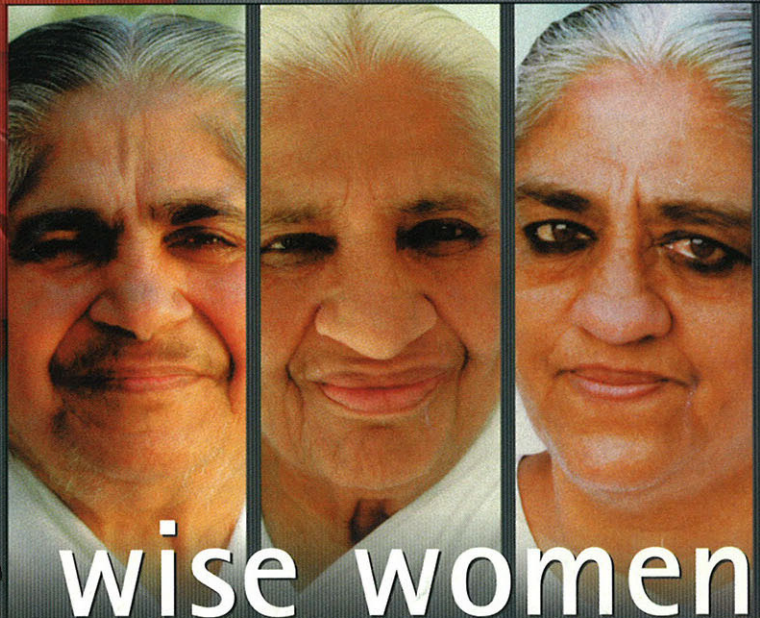
# heart & soul

Insights and Inspirations for Living in the Light

ISSUE 18

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wise words  
from the lives of  
three old souls.



## the three wise women

### Opening the Heart to God

How to cultivate an  
intimate relationship  
with God

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#### On Being a Leader

What it means to be a leader  
in a spiritual context

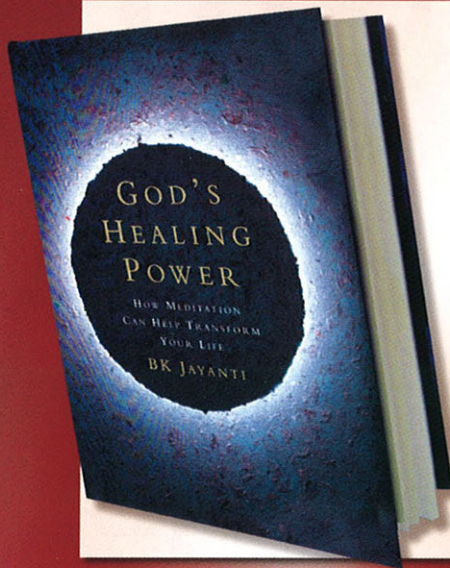
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#### The Science of Spirituality

Evidence of the long awaited meeting  
of soul and science



# NEW WINDOWS ONTO THE WORLD OF SPIRIT



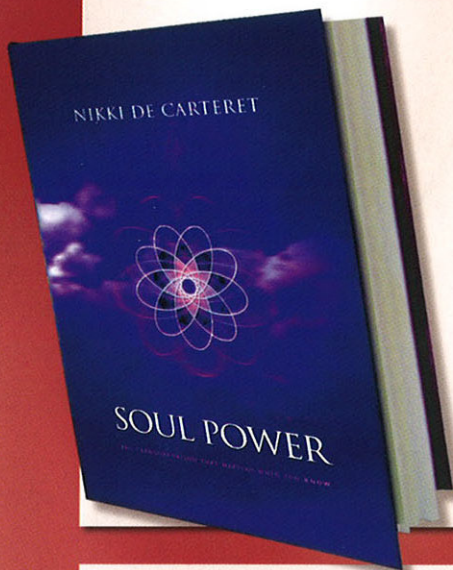
## God's Healing Power

How meditation can help transform your life

**SISTER JAYANTI**

Meditation is a natural state of being. Consciously or not we all experience meditative states from time to time, but the insights in this book describe a more formal and focused approach to meditation, making it a powerful tool which we can use to great effect in our lives. Sister Jayanti is a world renowned teacher of meditation with over thirty years of experience in helping others to learn the practice of meditation as well as inspire them to develop the spiritual dimension of life.

Published by Penguin in 2002



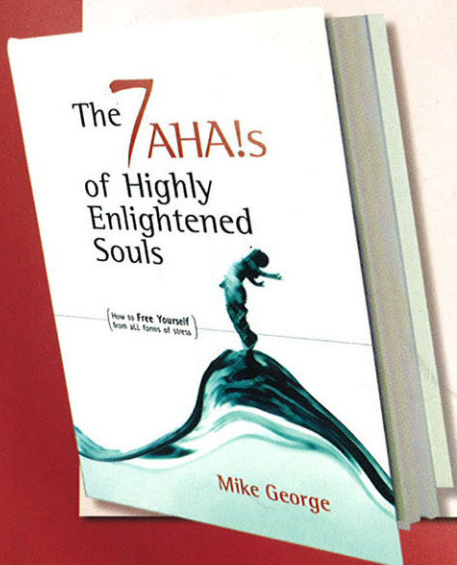
## Soul Power

The Transformation that happens when you know

**NIKKI DE CARTERET**

Juxtaposing fascinating teachings from the ancient mystics with stories of modern seekers, as well as her own extraordinary journey towards wholeness, Nikki de Carteret invites you to explore the factors that drain your spiritual energy, and what transformational forces restore it. Written in a poetic and meditative style this book is a discovery of spirit and spiritual growth. Examining themes such as love, enlightenment, silence, compassion, synchronicity, dark night of the soul, harmony and bliss, it serves as a friendly road map to the spiritual process.

Published by O Books in Spring 2003



## The 7 AHA!s of Highly Enlightened Souls

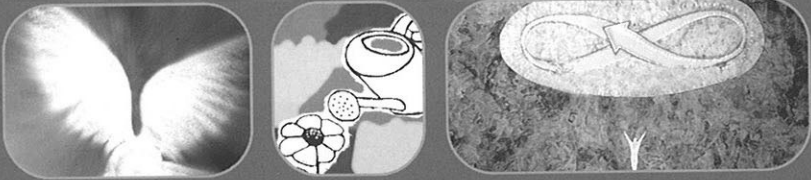
How to free yourself from ALL FORMS of stress

**MIKE GEORGE**

There are few books which will tell you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about why we suffer daily from the dis-ease we call stress. Mike George condenses twenty years of experience into 7 myths, 7 insights and the 7 AHA!s which are essential if you want to set yourself free of all mental and spiritual discomfort. He explains why there are so many 'tall stories' about the causes of our suffering, how we are imprisoned by the illusion that our pain is our pleasure, and why it is no accident that the word 'lie' can be found at the centre of so many of our beliefs!

Published by O Books in Spring 2003

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# welcome

wise words in the wilderness of waffle!



**I**n our information media driven world it is becoming genuinely hard to discern the truth from a thousand voices of distortion, spin, obsfucation and downright deviousness. Perhaps it's not surprising, as much of the information we require to assess, weigh, clarify and make our daily decisions comes in soundbite size chunks. But the fogginess and fuzziness of what we hear goes much deeper.

It seems that in politics it's now quite hard to find an honest servant of the realm! Smokescreens, spinning, deflecting and denying now appear to be the conditioned responses to the call for accountability. Power is being protected, personal agendas pursued and it's hard to see the difference between the political and the personal.

In sport the idea of playing the game for the sake of the game is almost stone dead. The prize is paramount, and participation is often relegated to the level of necessity in order to collect the cheque. The joy of playing is a distant echo of sporting times gone by. Money does the talking

and almost every individual sport is reduced to a business. And business is seldom playful.

In the exploding area of health and wellbeing there are so many opinions in a jungle of conflicting views. It's almost impossible to work out what's good or bad for you. Some say drink lots of water others say no need; some say take vitamins and supplements others say it's a waste of money; some scientists say we all might have BSE, others say nonsense; some say cholesterol kills, others say it is essential for good health. We believe all too easily and unwittingly the loudest or most recent voice and then cry victim of propaganda, ignorance or the agenda of commercial interest when we hear contradictory views.

It is hard to find a place and people where personal views and stories are free of hidden agendas, free of the desire for recognition and fame and free from commercial interest. It's hard to find voices in the jungle which can shed a little light on how to face the deeper challenges of living and thriving in this congested, busy, bruising, speedy world. Fortunately there are always voices that are beyond propaganda. They are difficult to find, but hard to ignore, as they often speak quietly, away from the spotlight of the media and glamorisation. Our attention is drawn by their authenticity and integrity. They are the voices of genuine human experience.

So here we are again, with another issue of Heart & Soul! As always it is a mix of profound, real life insights and wisdom from those whose knowledge comes from first hand, often hard won experience.

As always there is a variety of subjects from God to leadership, from science to spirituality.

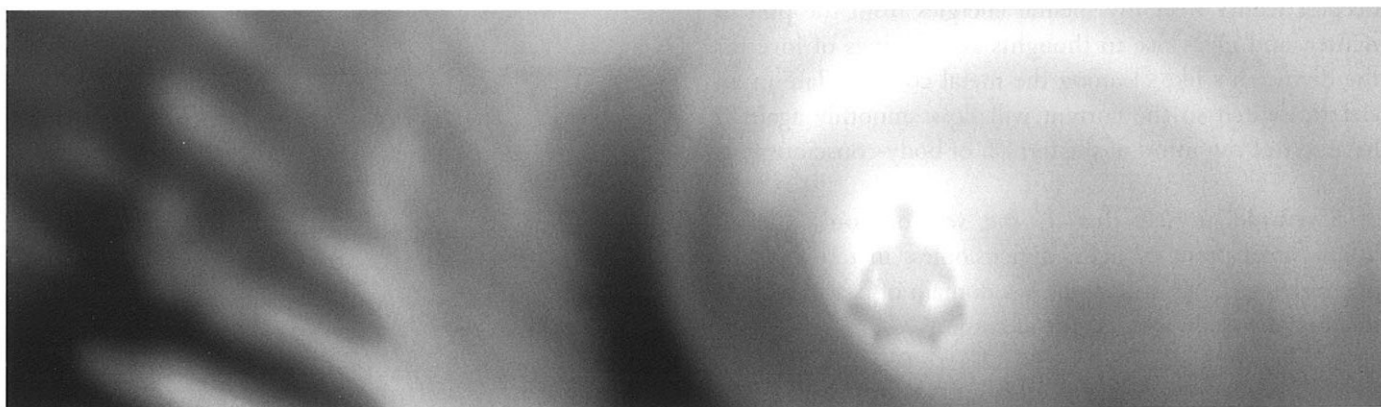
Welcome to more wise words in the wilderness of waffle!

Good to see you are still there!

# Opening the Heart to God

ARTICLE 1

In her new book *Sister Jayanti* shows us how to create a very personal relationship with God.



**M**editation means allowing the mind to dwell on aspects of eternal truth. One part of that is the awareness of the eternal identity of the soul. The second is awareness of God, as a supreme and unchanging source of truth.

It's a joy to me that we are not as shy of using God's name as we were even a few years ago (though I have difficulty today with 'His' as a pronoun - while used here for simplicity, 'He' and 'His' are not meant to imply a male form).

Certainly, thirty years ago in England, when people said they would like to learn about yoga, they would often add that they did not want to hear anything about God.

The climate has changed. I feel we are ready to discover more about this being who is called God. Perhaps that is because there has been the opportunity to explore other concepts and philosophies in which God did not feature, and we have found them wanting. Perhaps also, seeing the problems the world faces, we have realised that we cannot do the job of making a better world on our own.

I used to be reluctant to touch on the topic of God myself. Growing up in my teens in London, I was exposed

to Hinduism through my family, and to a certain amount of Christianity through school, and I had many Jewish friends. The difficulty for me had been to get answers on the subject of God that would touch both my head and my heart.

I felt that the concept present in much Eastern philosophy, of God as an all-pervading energy, had an appealing universality. Yet, what was the nature of that energy, such that it could help me personally? I also found it hard to understand how there could be a being who was supreme - the Highest-on-High - yet with whom one could have a personal relationship.

On the other hand, when people spoke of finding fulfilment or salvation by relating to God in human form, that did not seem as if it could be the whole story. My heart could recognise the love and faith this helped to inspire, but my head was not satisfied. The image of Krishna as God's true incarnation, for example, was not appealing for most people in the West, and the image of Christ as the being who is God did not appeal to most in the East.

East or West, I felt distaste for the exclusivity and divisiveness that religion seemed capable of engendering, although it was clear to me that this was a product of

human interpretation rather than divine will.

The beauty of meditation is that it can bring us to a shared, universal understanding of God, no matter what our religious or philosophical background, by taking us into the experience of God as a being of light. Whatever our distinctive faith or philosophy, it will be enhanced by this spiritual experience.

## Entering the spiritual domain

To open my heart to God, I need first to bring into focus the understanding of myself as a being of light, non-physical and eternal. This direct experience of my own deepest reality frees my mental energies from the pull of matter, and gives rise to thoughts and feelings of love for the divine. It's like cleaning the metal contact plate in an electric switch so the current will flow smoothly again. I have to free my mind of the tarnish of body-consciousness.

I remind myself that I, the self or soul, am an infinitesimal point of light, dimensionless in terms of the physical world. My true home is a domain of peace, beyond the flux of worldly events, outside time.

There, I exist as a tiny star, like a seed, containing within me the potential for everything that I am to be and do on the stage of the world, when the time comes for me to play my part. My skills, my talents, my strengths and weaknesses, my aspirations, my dreams, everything I ever experience - the blueprint for all this is within the soul. It's a huge resource, which I can access when I come back to the awareness of the eternal nature of the soul.

In this consciousness of I, the soul, as a living light, non-physical and eternal, it becomes possible for me to approach the subject of God. It is actually quite simple.

Mystics of all religions have spoken of God as light. The question which arises is, what kind of light? It's a light that seems to have life, that radiates love, that gives a sense of knowing and belonging, a light that's able to give comfort and remove fear. It isn't physical light, and yet it is illumination. It's described as the light of pure consciousness - of love, of truth, of wisdom, of bliss.

The beauty and simplicity of God, in the understanding and experience offered by Raja Yoga, is that He has positive attributes that are the same as the innate qualities of all human beings, but to an infinite degree. Just a point of light, infinitesimal, like all souls, but ever full, with nothing to detract from the original qualities, which are therefore limitless. Every human soul possesses these qualities, but to

different degrees. This is a fact of nature, arising from the fact that we have different parts to play in the world. We also differ in the extent to which we lose sight of those original qualities in the course of playing our parts.

Because of His unchanging qualities, however, God is able to serve as a reference point for that which is highest in humans. This is the wonderful secret for drawing on God's power: to understand that my original nature is also God's nature, and it is my right, as a child of the Supreme, to replenish my truth in relationship with this spiritual parent. All God asks of me is that I should keep bringing my mind back to Him, and stop performing the selfish, body-conscious actions that obscure the relationship.



## Making the connection

In meditation, I move my consciousness away from the body, into the awareness of the soul, so that my mind can go beyond the distractions of the physical world and into that realm of infinite light, which is the spiritual dimension. There, I focus my mind on God as a point of light, and allow myself to connect with the qualities of the Supreme.

I encounter a mind that is an ocean of peace, and of love. There is also an intelligence, holding all wisdom, with an infinite capacity for understanding; and a complete benevolence, never demanding, only bestowing.

Let's experiment with this. It's useful, first, to designate a specific place in your home as your meditation corner or room, so that it develops the right associations. As far as possible, it should be quiet and comfortable, and without distractions.

Sitting up straight, gazing ahead, but with your attention turned inwards, try the following thoughts. You may read.

*I take a few long, deep breaths ... As I observe myself doing so, I can feel my thoughts slowing down... within my mind, I create the image of my eternal identity ... the spark of light, the life in this physical costume... I detach my consciousness from its identification with matter and come to the awareness of the eternal being . . . with the power of my mind, I, the soul move into a realm of light, beyond all physical pulls ... in this place of light I come to the Supreme... I see the Supreme as a point of light, an infinitesimal spark ... from the Supreme, I begin to feel waves of peace and love reaching me... after such a long time, it's so refreshing... I'm connecting again with the Supreme ... and as waves of peace surround me, I absorb peace within my being... and radiate peace into the world.*

Keeping the connection with the ocean of peace, I carry peace with me as I return to the awareness of my physical surroundings. I can practise, in turn, connecting with God as the ocean of peace, of love, of wisdom, of purity, and of bliss. God's attributes are said to be as vast as the ocean, but these five qualities contain the essence. And when the soul fills with these qualities in meditation, it is able to experience its own highest nature.

In the physical world, opposites attract; in the spiritual domain, like connects with like. This is why the first step in meditation is to practise soul-consciousness, through which I'm able to discipline my mind and create a degree of peace within myself. Then I'll be able to connect with God quickly, when I wish, and receive the experience of those unlimited qualities.

So, soul-consciousness not only allows me to begin to understand God, it tunes my mind to the right frequency for experiencing God and the qualities of the divine.

If, through the day, my mind has been caught in the flux of people and events and has become restless, peaceless, and probably unfeeling as well, I'll have driven myself far from God and the connection will be harder to make. When I live as part of the rat race, becoming mechanical and sub-human in the quality of my thoughts and actions, small wonder that the Source of the highest qualities seems distant. However, bringing myself back to the consciousness of the soul, I'm always able to move in the direction where I can start knowing God.

The connection I make with God is my personal, subjective experience. I can listen to lectures about God, I can read about God, I can hear many beautiful things about God, but only through my own practice of soul-consciousness, and by experimenting with this idea of focusing my mind on the Supreme, can I come to an experience of God and receive the benefit accordingly.

The experience is subjective, but that does not mean God is not a reality. Even in a human relationship, it's my own thoughts and perceptions that connect me with

someone. The words I share with them and the actions I engage in with them come later, but first it's a connection of minds. The closer the connection of minds, the deeper and more rewarding will be the exchange within the relationship.

The same is true of my relationship with God. In my mind, I envisage the Supreme as a point of light, a seed of vast potential like myself, although in God's case the ultimate Seed, with the highest attributes. Through this mental connection, I attune to the qualities inherent in the Supreme.

## Deepening the relationship

As I get to know God, the relationship deepens. I realise that although He is seed-like, a point of reference, God also has a personality - of truth, of beauty, of benevolence, of giving. How is this possible?

We normally think of a seed as inert, despite its enormous potential. But when I link my mind to God's, it's clear to me that He is anything but inert. The energy within God is subtle, in that it is non-physical, but it is also radiant like light, and in meditation I can catch that radiance, absorb it and feel its warmth and wisdom healing me, and making me whole.

I can also see God's greatness at work in others. When I see virtue around me, I know that ultimately this comes from God. I'm aware, too, that some people stay so true to God in how they live, as to enable others to experience the radiance of the divine. Prophets, saints, mystics and the founders of the great religions have also contributed to our feeling for God through their lives and teachings.

Despite these examples, however, violence, selfishness and suffering do not seem to have diminished, and have probably increased, if we look behind the facade of material prosperity. The need of our times is for something more direct. My experience is that the Supreme Soul, recognising this need, is shining the light of His pure thought more brightly than ever into the world, inviting us to reclaim for ourselves the inheritance of truth, by drawing on the qualities inherent in the Supreme and making them our own.

## Mother and Father

The relationship can develop at many levels. For example, particularly at the beginning and end of the day, there is special value in relating to God as my spiritual parent. Giving time to a sweet inner conversation and loving experience with my Supreme Father and Mother, I begin to relate to God as my spiritual parent. Giving time to a sweet inner conversation and loving experience with my Supreme Father and Mother, I become equipped with the emotional resources needed to stay strong in the face of life's challenges.

Physical parents do their best but at the human level, the impressions left on our minds by childhood years are often mixed. So, I leave aside all those memories, good and bad, and in soul-consciousness I find I can draw on such an unlimited source of goodness as to make God the perfect parent.

As the Supreme Father, God is like the sun, radiating the energy of truth, helping me grow with the creative power of His being. In the stillness of the early morning, I feel His warmth and light awakening me, pushing away the shadows of my body-consciousness, charging the battery of truth within me. His power shines into my being, protecting, guiding and strengthening me.

When I focus on God as the spiritual Mother, I am empowered by a flow of love, mercy and acceptance that is unconditional and unending. In this relationship, God personifies the feminine principle, nurturing with tenderness and care, able to give constantly without any other agenda. This Supreme Mother also forgives, enabling me to learn from my mistakes. It's beautiful to go to God as the Mother in the evening, put the day in front of Her, feel Her acceptance and guidance, and become free from all burdens.

## Teacher

It is central to God's role that He has a deep desire to share all He knows. Particularly at this time, it's as though the Supreme, like a ripe seed, is bursting to give human beings the benefit of the truth He holds.

Very consciously, I can draw on a relationship with God as my Supreme Teacher to obtain nourishment for the mind, and to maintain my spiritual growth. This can come through silent connection in meditation, and also through my own efforts to put into practice the main lesson, that of recovering and maintaining awareness of myself as a soul in relationship with God.

It's good to set aside the ego of thinking I am already grown up and don't need to learn any more. Such thinking makes the mind stagnant, and leaves me open to wasteful or negative thought.

Instead, thinking of myself as a student, my mind stays fresh and enthusiastic. Setbacks become learning opportunities. God the Teacher helps me understand what is going on in the world around me, so I can interpret it constructively and deal with it successfully.

I don't just receive knowledge, but the strength to keep moving along the path to a point where I can truly become wise. In meditation, knowledge comes to me from within, and I realise that I can become the embodiment of that knowledge if I let go of habits of thought or feeling that contradict it. God, the Truth, helps me move towards that state of truth.

## Companion and Guide

During the day, it's beautiful to keep God as my friend, companion and guide. The relationship one has with friends can be even more intimate than with family. One can't choose one's parents, but one certainly chooses one's friends.

When I choose God as my closest friend, my mind will be drawn in the direction of that companionship, because it's something I appreciate, value and enjoy. In success and failure, in moments of happiness or when I face difficulties, in victory and defeat, I can keep my sense of perspective by sharing everything with my spiritual friend.

God will also serve me as a truly impartial guide. In any situation where I am uncertain how to move forward, I connect for a moment with the Supreme, the One who has absolute truth. Then, the question to ask is not what do I want, or what do others want, but: What does God want? The deeper my connection has been with God in meditation, the clearer the answer will come. It's also a matter of practice, just as sometimes you have to grow accustomed to someone's voice to be able to understand them. When I have learned to listen to God accurately, it's as if there's a whisper in my ear: I'll know, without wasting time and energy, the right course of action.

*Extracted from God's Healing Power by Jayanti Kirpilani  
Published by Penguin Books*

*Sister Jayanti is the European Director of the  
Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University*





ARTICLE 2



## SOMETIMES PUSH SOMETIMES PULL

**Nikki de Carteret** recalls a very personal and powerful experience of an intimate meeting with God.

**O**nce, when I was a three-month-old practitioner of Raja Yoga, I made a bargain with God -- not for money or anything material, but a bargain for love. I entered the small meditation room and sat with a firm thought, "I'm not getting up from here until You give me a experience of Your love."

It seemed to me that God was smiling, but I was serious. It took all of my courage to speak to God that way. I was desperate in that moment to feel divine love. Somehow, I had understood that this relationship was worth standing up for. If I were God's child, I had a right to Divine love. Doesn't every child have a right to his or her parents' time, attention and love?

At first I sat with a little fear in my heart. What if God wouldn't respond? What if in reality I wasn't worthy to receive Divine love? What if God didn't care?

Within the space of an hour, I had looked at my watch at least ten times. My backside was sore, but in stubborn determination I sat myself even harder on the floor. It would be a long night. I said, "I'm not getting up from here, God. I told you I wouldn't. Not until You show me Your love."

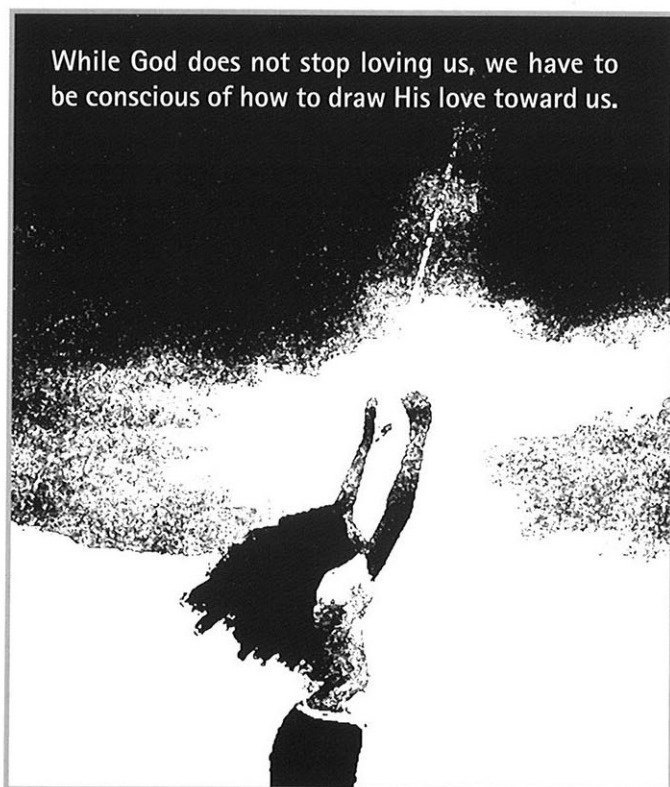
Another hour went by. I rubbed my eyes to keep myself alert, and all the while my mind kept saying, "I'm here, I'm here." My mind felt as tense as a tightly-wound ball of string. Slowly, surely, before an endless night I was teaching myself how to unravel it. I was learning to let go and let God.

Then, when I least expected it, a long hand reached out and opened the door to my heart. There it lay, trembling and exposed, my vulnerable heart melting under an extraordinary heat, softening before the intensity of God's touch. Like a transmitter, God was beaming His energy down on me, pouring His love over me. He turned the intensity up, higher and higher, stronger and stronger, until I could not hold it any longer.

"Stop!" I told God. "Please, stop." It was rude. But I had to let Him know. There was only so much love I could take...

Having a relationship with God is a two-way street. You make effort, God responds. God reaches out, you respond. Sometimes it's a push, sometimes a pull. Sometimes you can spend hours talking to God and feel you aren't getting as close as you would like. Other times, out of the blue, He reveals Himself to you, makes you feel special, as if no one else is as precious to Him as you are.

This happened to me a few months ago. I was sitting in my bedroom cross-legged on the bed. I was minding my own business, not even thinking of God, writing a letter to a friend. Suddenly, a pure, silky energy descended on me and covered me with a warm glow. I knew it was Divine energy. It had that soft, luminous quality to it, that unmistakable firmness and strength. Wrapped in God's blanket of love, I felt protected. Not that I needed protection at that moment, or even love. God was making a silent offering, a gift of His presence.



**While God does not stop loving us, we have to be conscious of how to draw His love toward us.**

At times like this, I am grateful for God's grace. I ask, "How can I receive so much tenderness when the loving is not initiated by me? Does God consciously choose to reach out when He feels like it? Or is it simply that, at certain peaceful moments when I have no tension in my mind, I am more in tune with His energy and can feel His presence? Or maybe these moments are a return for the efforts I have made earlier to forge my link and make my connection with Him strong?"

Whatever the case, this phenomenon of God taking an active role in our relationship astounds me. I cannot

explain it fully. All I know is that God has His ways of doing things. So, I've learned not to question God's timing or reasoning, but to enjoy His magnetic pull whenever it happens.

There are times on the mystic path, however, when the pull is conditional upon our state of soul as well as our own desire for union. God is like a Magnet seeking out the needle of the soul. But if the soul isn't ready, or if it covered by the rust of restlessness and negativity, then the pull cannot happen so easily. Internally, each of us is aware of the heaviness within and the reasons why there are moments when we are not attentive or attracted to the Divine.

While God does not stop loving us, we have to be conscious of how to draw His love toward us. Attracting the Divine into our lives requires a clear mind and a clean heart. Dadi Janki, my spiritual mentor, once said, "Make your heart clean for God to sit in. Where do you keep God? In the temples and mosques, or in a clean heart? If you keep the world's garbage inside you, God's love won't be able to enter your heart."

So think about making your heart a temple, and invite God in. Each time you meditate, prepare yourself with love. Sit with freshness, as if you are connecting to God for the first time. Do not think about the experience you had yesterday, or the one you might have tomorrow.

No two meditations are the same. You cannot re-create the time when you sat on a rock by the sea, the dry wind caressing your face, and light streaming out of your hair. You can remember the sweetness of God pulling you into silence, but if you impose that scene on your meditation today, hoping to retrieve that same sweetness, that same silence, then you will miss out on the magic of the here and now.

Be open to the present. Each moment is like a seed waiting to flower. Each opportunity to connect with God demands all your attention. Go deep into God. There is no limit to what God offers, no limit either to the steps you can take toward the Divine.

The desire for intimacy is reciprocal. God sees the effort that you are making and gives you a million times return for each tentative step. It's His way of training you to take responsibility for this relationship.

If you keep God in front of your eyes, He won't let you out of His sight.

*Extracted from Soul Power: The Transformation that Happens when You Know*

*Published by O-Books, UK (April 2003)*

*Nikki de Carteret is an international speaker, seminar leader, and teacher of meditation. She is the Co-ordinator the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Centre in Vancouver, Canada.*

*Be open to the present. Each moment is like a seed waiting to flower. Each opportunity to connect with God demands all your attention.*

## REFLECTIONS ON SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

### REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS:

1. How well do you know yourself? What steps have you taken so far to explore your inner world?
2. How has the knowledge that you are a soul changed the way you perceive yourself?
3. What aspects of body consciousness are limiting your spiritual growth? For instance, do you base your identity on your age, physical appearance, gender, job description, wealth, or position in society?
4. How close do you feel to God? If you feel far from God, what old beliefs are preventing you from forming a relationship? Make a list.

### EXERCISES FOR SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:

1. To connect to your seat of spiritual power, have the awareness that you are a soul. Deep within lies a treasure store of many virtues: patience, tolerance, happiness, contentment, courage, wisdom, etc. Spend five to ten minutes each day contemplating these inner qualities. Think about the times when you experienced these qualities and remember how you felt. Now meditate deeply on each quality so that you radiate it out from your whole being.
2. Think about the qualities of God that attract you. God is the Ocean of Love and Peace, Happiness and Truth. Visualise the Divine as a fountain of light and that these qualities are rays pouring down on you and filling you.
3. Consider the relationship that you would like to develop with God. Do you like the idea of God as your Mother or Father, Teacher, Beloved, or Friend? Have a conversation with God in the context of that relationship. You can talk about your hopes and

fears, your life plans and spiritual efforts.

4. At the beginning and end of each meditation, take time to realise that you have the right to be in a relationship with God and to receive all the Goodness that God has to offer. Practise having gratitude for what you receive.

### MEDITATION ON PEACE:

Turn your attention inward. Find your place of focus on the still point within. Become aware of your thoughts. Start by creating thoughts of peace. Allow each thought to be filled with peace, and then fill each space between your thoughts with peace. Become aware that peace is your original quality of being. You are totally at peace with yourself. Your mind is a vehicle of peace. Your body is a temple of peace. You are so peaceful that outside events and circumstances do not disturb your peace. Say to yourself, "I am a beautiful soul filled with the power of peace."

Peaceful feelings now flow from your thoughts of peace. Notice that your energy has changed. Internally, you feel stronger, more alive, more concentrated. Now turn your attention to the Supreme. Feel that God, the Ocean of Peace, is beckoning to you. From the world of silence, God is calling you to His Home, your Home. You stand before God as if you were standing at the shore of the Ocean. Waves of God's peace lap against you, filling your mind, filling your whole being. You are held by peace, supported by peace, nurtured by the peace of God.



ARTICLE 3

Duane Boyce  
brilliantly  
highlights how  
the way we  
regard others  
defines the  
quality of our  
relationships.

# TWO WAYS OF BEING

**T**here are two ways of being in the world, or two states of 'soul.' One is the state in which I see other people primarily as things, as objects that either help me or hinder me in obtaining what I want. I see myself as real with hopes, dreams, fears, and wants but I see others as mere objects for my use. The other way of being is the state in which I fully recognise others to be just as real as I am. I acknowledge their personhood I embrace the reality that they have their own hopes, dreams, fears, wants, and needs. Others are as real to me as I am to myself.

Others have noted the difference between these two ways of being and have given them names, perhaps the most memorable of which comes from the work of Martin Buber. He called the one in which I am closed to others' inwardness 'I-It,' and the other, in which I am open to it, 'I-Thou' or 'I-You.' Buber often uses that terminology, and so will I.

To illustrate the difference between these two ways of being, picture me hard at work in my study when suddenly I am interrupted by the sound of my young children quarrelling in the next room. Now, how do I see my children in this situation? What meaning do they have for me? Do I see them as problem children who have distracted and disturbed me during my important work! Or do I see them instead as children with a problem who

can use my help? Do I see them as disturbers of my peace, or as in need of my aid?

To see them the first way (all too common for me) is to be 'I-It'. It is to see them at that moment primarily as objects as little obstacles to my peace and concentration. To see them the second way (this happens too) is to be 'I-You'. It is to see them empathetically, in terms of their own needs instead of just my own. Far from being obstacles, they are simply what they are people who seem to need my help.

The same analysis applies to any situation, including work. Which happens more frequently seeing my co-workers as objects who either help or hinder me in achieving the aims of my life, or seeing them as real people with deeply felt aims of their own?

It is common to switch back and forth between being 'I-It' and 'I-You' (everyone's experience confirms this), yet these are fundamental categories, for in any given moment I am either one or the other. I am either alive to other people's reality or I am not, and everything else, including how I use my intellect, will depend on this pivotal issue.

## The Connection Between Home and Work

This distinction between two ways of being helps us see the connection between our lives at home and our lives at work. That connection is typically identified as one of

balance. We are told, "Be both a good worker and a good spouse and parent." But the link between home and work actually reaches much deeper because the fundamental variable for success is identical for each of them. It is simply whether we are being 'I-It' or 'I-You' in our relationships.

In other words, when we go wrong at work it is for the same reasons that we go wrong at home, and vice versa. Whether we go right or wrong, either at home or at work, depends on who we are, on the type of character we have, on our way of being with others. It depends, in short, on our 'souls.' Let me illustrate.

Early in our marriage we had three daughters: Kelly, Kimberly and Rachel. One day, when Rachel was about eight months old, I watched as Kelly and Kimberly both tried to carry her. Kelly had Rachel awkwardly by the head. At the same time Kimberly had her by the feet. Then these two little girls (they were young, too) began to carry their little sister . . . in different directions. Kelly went north, and Kimberly went south. Rachel twisted, stretched, and gasping for air was stuck in the middle. She began registering complaints as loudly as her eight-month-old lungs would permit. I quickly came to the rescue, my disentangling efforts punctuated with sober remarks on the inadvisability of such group activities in the future.

After this incident I reflected for a moment: this kind of thing must happen all the time, even when we don't see it. Poor Rachel must feel constantly mistreated and abused. She must deeply resent her two older sisters, I thought.

The next morning I saw Kelly and Kimberly eagerly sneak down the hall to Rachel's room. They were trying to be quiet but were failing. Giggling and chattering, in what to them were the softest of whispered tones, they tip-toed up to Rachel's door. They began to call out Rachel's name, softly at first, then more loudly until Rachel was fully awake and rattling her crib frantically in response.

Kelly and Kimberly then burst noisily into the room, giggling and squealing and still calling her name. Rachel, too, was giggling and shrieking with delight. Then, in their usual unco-ordinated and incompetent way, Kelly and Kimberly dragged Rachel over the top rail, out of the crib, down to the floor. By the time she reached the floor she had been twisted, stretched, scraped, yanked, poked, pummelled . . . and hugged, and kissed. I looked closely at Rachel as she lay momentarily on the floor in her sisters' arms. She was all smiles.

I wondered about this experience for days. Rachel loved the very people who seemed constantly to mistreat her. How could that be?

Finally the answer came, too simple for my over-educated adult eyes to have noticed immediately. Rachel loved Kelly and Kimberly simply because they loved her. I had watched Kelly and Kimberly try to carry Rachel. I had watched them yank and dump her out of her crib. I had seen incompetence and failure in their awkward efforts. But what I had completely overlooked was the consummate affection and glee that motivated every one of their clumsy acts.

And Rachel knew even when Kelly and Kimberly were clumsy, even when they hurt her that it was not deliberate. She felt no malice from them. She felt from them instead a profound (though inept) kind of love, and that's what she responded to. More important to Rachel than their bungling was their unbounded and obvious affection. In Warner's terms, they were 'I-You' toward Rachel, and Rachel knew it.

This general principle of life is widely overlooked, but true. People respond primarily to the way we feel toward them. More important than our knowledge, our skills, or our education, is simply our goodness the quality of our hearts and our souls. That is why the best parents can make mistakes every day and still accomplish much of what they want. It is not their clumsiness that their children notice so much; it is their goodness, their devotion, their affection, their honest effort, and their love. That is the most important variable, and it is what children primarily respond to.

## Work

The same is true at work. When it comes to our relationships, what we are is more important than what we know, or even than what we do. Even here matters of the heart transcend matters of the mind.

In a unit with about two hundred others, I once was supervised by a man who seemed to have all the skills of effective management. The structure was clear and well-organised (this type of work required that); he communicated to us frequently; and he was kind in his manner. But despite all this, it was obvious that he just did not like us. There was always the sense that he was being nice by sheer grit, that it was something required of him, but unnatural. The forced smiles, the soft-toned but sarcastic and impatient corrections, the laboured sighs that accompanied his calls for improvement all suggested a manager who felt forced to put up with people who were fundamentally unworthy of him.

Despite this manager's strenuous efforts, his genuine

feelings about us could not be hidden. We felt devalued by him because he devalued us. What he knew, and even what he implemented in the way of sound management principles, were both less important to us than what he was, how he fundamentally regarded us. Whereas Kelly and Kimberly's genuine attitude showed through even though they were clumsy, this manager's genuine attitude showed through even though he was skilled.

## The Ecology of the Soul

It is important to see how we responded to this manager. Did we do our level best? Even rise to new heights of record-breaking performance? Of course not. The most widespread response was to search for a way out of the unit, and many succeeded. Of those who remained, most settled into a mode of nonchalant performance in achieving results and of minimal compliance in following directions.

This manager, in the face of such deteriorating performance, could easily put his finger on the problem . . . us. He had been sure that we were deficient workers, and by dragging our feet and barely complying with his directives we demonstrated to him that he was absolutely right. Our behaviour confirmed what he had always known. He felt vindicated. What this manager couldn't see was how his attitude toward us invited the very behaviour he was trying so desperately to avoid. He undermined on one level all that he was trying to accomplish on another and felt vindicated all the while.

Despite this manager's strenuous efforts to achieve success, the dismal consequences of his 'I-It' way of being with us were practically inescapable. We did not start out as the uncaring, lackadaisical complainers that we eventually became, but his attitude provoked (although it did not cause) precisely that response. And it did not end there. As a unit we became more disenchanted with each other. Although we united in pointing our fingers at him, we gradually came to blame each other more frequently as well. In the face of his 'I-It' way of being toward us, we responded in a similar 'I-It' way toward him and toward each other.

The consequences of this manager's attitude were thus innumerable and widespread; furthermore, they were hidden from his view. As Warner's work shows, this manager could not see the effect he had on others because he was fundamentally self-deceived. The same became true of us as well, and that was part of the ensuing misfortune. Once we began blaming him and justifying ourselves, we no longer could see the truth any better than

he could. We saw it all as his problem, not ours. All of us were stuck, with no way out, like fish strangling to death in a polluted pond. The only difference is that we were the creators of our own pollution.

This process goes the other way, too, of course. A manager whose way of being is 'I-You' who genuinely values fellow workers and delights in helping them succeed—has an influence that is just as contagious as that of the 'I-It' manager. Such a leader brings out the best in us; we want to follow that lead and do all that we can to succeed. And this is true even if this leader is less 'skilful' than another. What we respond to in managers has far less to do with their skill as managers than with their simple goodness as people. The ecological effects of a good soul are just as widespread as those of a bad. And the same, I might add, is true of us in subordinate positions as well.

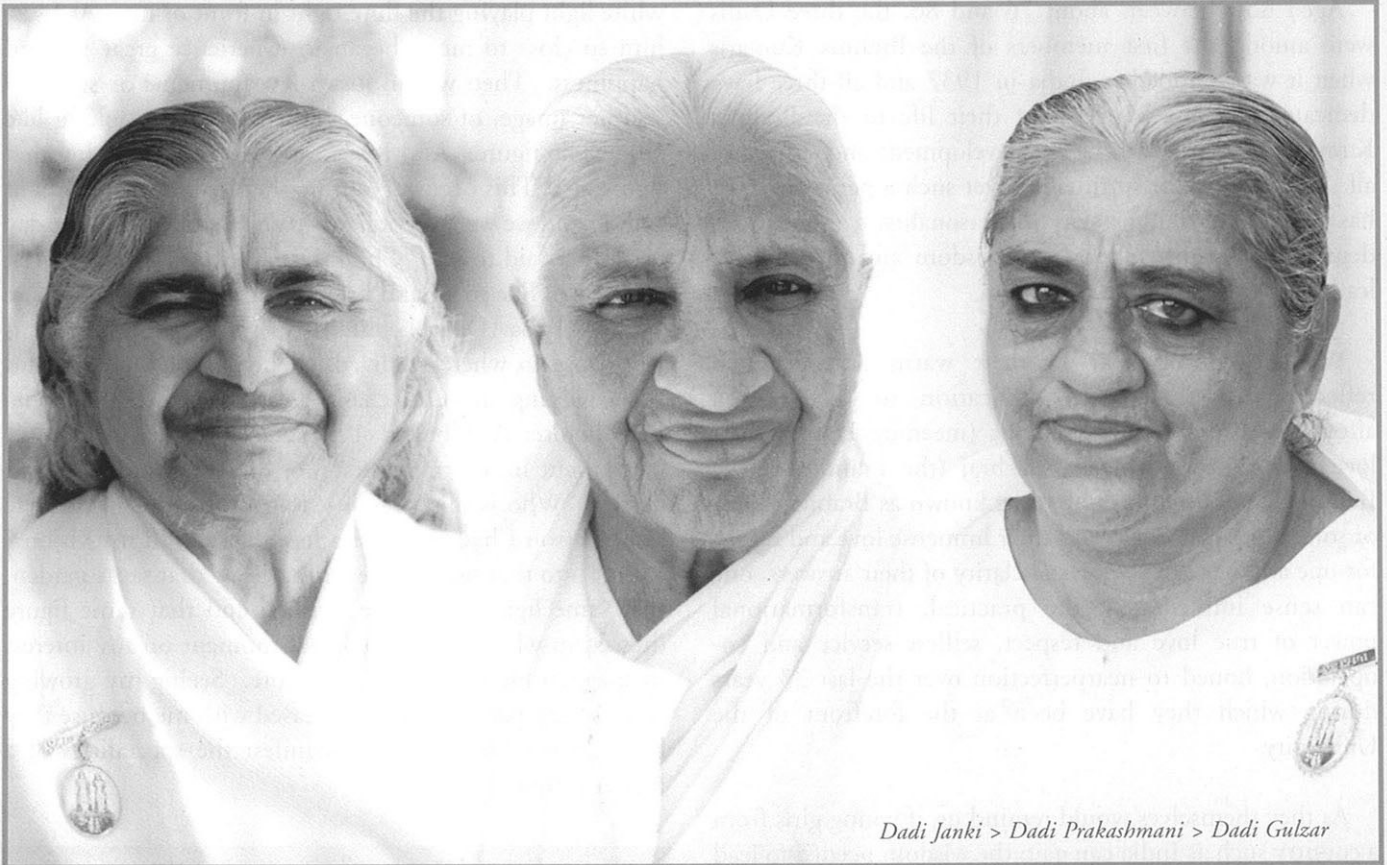
## Stewardship

We are entrusted with many things, both at home and at work. Little that we work with is genuinely our own. Our spouses, our children, our co-workers, our corporate resources all are more like a trust, something given to us to protect and enhance, and for whose protection and enhancement we are held accountable. In the deepest sense of the word, and especially in the most important areas of life, we are stewards.

There are many ways to analyse the notion of stewardship and to apply it to work and home life. But the deepest truth about stewardship I have tried to point out: all the dimensions of stewardship ultimately centre in our very way of being, our souls. Try as we might, we cannot transcend who we are by merely applying information, skills, or techniques even in the service of a stewardship. The effect of our souls on others is inescapable, and it is our primary influence. Regardless of my intellect and training, and despite my hard work, my stewardship over others will never yield what it might if it springs from an outlook on the world that is fundamentally self-preoccupied and blaming. And this means that whatever my obligations may be, my most significant stewardship, especially in its effect on others, is the stewardship of my own soul. Reb Saunders was right.

*Duane Boyce, Ph.D., is executive vice president of The Arbinger Company, a nationwide management consulting firm.*





*Dadi Janki > Dadi Prakashmani > Dadi Gulzar*

# THE THREE WISE WOMEN

Gayatri Naraine in conversation with the **three Dadis**

**A** few years ago the opportunity arose to ask three of the Dadis (Senior Sisters) who are Administrative Heads of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University to reflect on what they have come to understand about some of life's most interesting questions. Dadi Prakashmani (Administrative Head), Dadi Janki (Additional Administrative Head) and Dadi Gulzar (Joint Administrative Head) reflected on various subjects. This is a small extract of a fascinating conversation.

Aged now between about 76 and 86, the three Dadis were among the first members of the Brahma Kumaris when it was founded in India in 1937 and all three have dedicated the last 65 years of their life to the Brahma Kumaris' spiritual path of self-development and service of all. The practice of spirituality over such a period of time has yielded a striking purity of personality, a tremendous depth and breadth of practical wisdom and a quality of leadership based on love.

What becomes clear in their warm and personal reflections is their total dedication to God, often affectionately referred to as Baba (meaning Father) their love and respect for Dada Lekhraj (the founder of the Brahma Kumaris who came to be known as Brahma Baba, or sometimes just Baba) and their immense love and regard for one another. In the crystal clarity of their answers, one can sense immediately the practical, transformational power of true love and respect, selfless service and co-operation, honed to near-perfection over the last 33 years during which they have been at the forefront of the University.

As they themselves would remind us, if young girls from a country such as India can gain the wisdom needed to lead a half-million-person worldwide organisation that models a new way of being in the world, then each of us can certainly learn these things too and put them to work in service to help bring about a better world.

### • Discovering one's specialities:

At this point in your life, it is very clear to everyone what your specialities are. Can you think of a time earlier in your life when you first began to understand your specialities?

#### Dadi Prakashmani:

At the very beginning when I came across the Organisation, I had the experience that I was dedicating my life to God, the Supreme Father, the Supreme Soul and that I was doing this through Brahma Baba. At that time I had this very clear feeling that my future was going to be a very bright one and that I was surrendering my life for the upliftment of the world. I felt that I was Gopi, the friend of God who had constant love for the Supreme Father.

I had an experience of divine vision. It was in October 1936, I was fourteen years old and I was studying Matric. I had the experience that there was a huge garden and far away into the distance there was a white light out of which came the image of the deity Krishna. He came out of that

white light playing the flute right in front of me. As I saw him so close to me, I began to experience great joy and happiness. Then within just a few moments or so I saw another image, of someone dressed in white looking like an angelic figure. And I was experiencing joy seeing that figure also. This occurred during the time of the festival of Diwali and we were on holiday from school. Then one day my father said to me, "Child, Dada Lekhraj gives lectures; would you like to go and listen to him?" The place where Brahma Baba (Dada Lekhraj) was giving the lecture was very close to where we lived. When I got there I heard Baba reciting the Om chant. I had never seen Brahma Baba before. As I looked at Baba reciting the Om chant, I again went into a trance state, of divine vision. I asked myself, "Who is this? He is yet again in front of me, the same person I had seen just a few days ago in my vision." I went into that same scene again. I saw that same garden, that same light, that same Krishna and that same figure dressed in white. And from that moment on my interest in spiritual life grew more and more. Seeing my growing interest, my parents felt very pleased with me because they felt that my life too could manifest the specialities of a higher purpose.



#### Dadi Janki:

My speciality, if I were to speak of it as a detached observer, is truth and humility. Whatever is fixed in the drama of life, the actor knows the part he or she has to play as time goes on. Whatever needs to be done, whenever it needs to be done, you don't think that this is what needs to be done, rather you do what is in front of you at that time. It is the humility and truth that makes me recognise my own speciality and when I have recognised that then I don't feel that the task is a big one.

The other aspect that I pay attention to is to be the same inside and outside – spiritual integrity. Whatever God is, however God is, one enjoys getting to know God in that way; in the same way, I feel that whoever gets to know me, to understand me, should also enjoy the process.



My nature is such that I don't like to make superficial efforts. If I ever come to a point in which things are happening superficially, it is then that I get confused. I do not like this even for a second, and whenever it does occur, I change it instantly.

I do not compare myself with anyone; I do not compete with anyone. Call it what you will – my speciality or my deep inner feeling – I aim to serve whomever I am serving with love. And the benefit of that is that I never look at anyone as young, old, intelligent, not intelligent, rich, poor; I do not look at any of these factors, I simply do what I have to do for that individual and serve him or her in that way. God is merciful, the loving one, the compassionate one and no matter what someone may have done, when they want to take refuge they come to God and feel that they have found a place of rest and comfort for themselves. So I feel that I too should be like that so that anyone can come to me when they are in situations of difficulty.

#### **Dadi Gulzar:**

When I first came onto the spiritual path I was very young and at that time my intellect was not very clear. As I continued to receive sustenance from the teachings and the founder of the Brahma Kumaris, I began to understand and experience spiritual knowledge in my life. This helped my specialities to manifest themselves.

I was very little, 10 years old, and Brahma Baba, the founder, used to say that I was a little thakur (a small image of a deity made either of silver or gold and kept in people's homes for personal worshipping). He would say, "This is what you are, an image of a deity." Because of this, I was able to experience spiritual intoxication from a very young age, and because of this intoxication it was as if the speciality of divine virtues naturally became part of me.

There was a group of us, and as we walked and moved around we used to experience that we really were deities. We received the knowledge of the soul. But it was not just knowledge; it was as if we were being reminded that we were souls. This made the stage of soul-consciousness very natural. When we communicated with each other, we spoke to each other in the consciousness that we are souls.

My nature from the very beginning was to be in solitude, to be very peaceful and to be very silent. I spoke very little and very softly and this became my speciality. Because of this speciality, there was no negativity or waste in my intellect and this allowed me to stay in the experience of deep silence. My intellect remained very good at having the power to catch whatever was being conveyed to me.

For communication to take place here, the intellect needs to be very clear. Clarity of intellect became my speciality. It was my speciality from a very young age and it remains my speciality today.

#### • **Role in Service:**

You play a very clear and special role in the service that you do, but perhaps it was not always so clear. Can you describe a time when you first came to understand the role you would play in service?

#### **Dadi Prakashmani:**

I always have the thought that I have surrendered my life for world benefit. It was as if I lived in anticipation of the days when I would be used as an instrument for world benefit on the basis of following elevated, spiritual principles. I always felt that God knew my future at every moment, at every second, and because of that I felt that I was inspired to maintain spiritual intoxication and to serve many other souls. I felt no attachment to anyone; I had love for everyone and everyone had love for me. This enabled me to stay in meditation for long periods of time and to stay in the true awareness of the true Father in a true way. From this I could understand that my role was a rather unique one.

#### **Dadi Janki:**

I have never ever thought whether my role is clear or not. Some people feel that they want to know what their role is before playing it. I have never thought that I don't have a role to play. What is real will begin to take shape naturally. I have never imagined that my role should be up front and that I should be in the vision of everyone. What definitely has helped is that Brahma Baba had many hopes in me. I have never thought that I would be able to serve in this way, but the hopes that Baba has had in me are instrumental in bringing me this far.

I remember a time when I thought to myself, "What can I do? I do not know how to give lectures. My body is not that strong; my appearance and personality is not very striking. I am just a little girl. So what can I do? What will be my fortune?" I remember sharing this with Baba. And Baba said, "Child, your fortune is in my hands." Since that moment I feel that my fortune is in God's hands and so I do not need to bother thinking of other things.

Usually, when a patient tells a surgeon his problem the surgeon understands instantly what he needs to do. But in order to please the patient he would allow him to explain in detail. In the same way, whatever situation a person may be relating to me, I know what needs to be done. For the person relating the situation, it may be a big thing, but I know the essence of what needs to be done to resolve the problem.

I remember visiting a science college in London in 1975 and I saw small groups of students totally engrossed in what they were doing, in a silent and thoughtful way.



Resolving situations and issues is a question of being in silence and solitude so that one may think very deeply. When one becomes extroverted then there is confusion, but when one goes inside then things become very clear. To go inside in a silent and thoughtful way allows the intellect to remain open and one can serve in the moment.

**Dadi Gulzar:**

My role became clear when I was first exposed to the subtle dimension of spiritual experiences. I was 15 years old. It was the first time when the whole aspect of the subtle dimension was being clarified and the process of transformation was becoming clear. It was from this time that I began to realise my responsibility: going into this subtle dimension, describing the experiences there clearly and writing them down accurately. All of this came to me as a responsibility, which I accepted. And as time went on my role became clearer to me.

• **The different roles of men and women:**

One of the unusual things about the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is the clear designation of women to fill the major leadership roles. What is your understanding of the reason for this choice and how does it work in a practical way; that is, how do women leaders in this Organisation take advantage of the specialities of men? How does equality fit into this relationship?

**Dadi Prakashmani:**

The first head of the Brahma Kumaris was Jagadamba Saraswati, whom everyone called Mama. Brahma Baba saw that women in Sindh were kept behind the curtain. They played the role of being at home and of being

subservient. Seeing this, Brahma Baba gave a lot of respect to women. He felt that as long as women were not awakened, the world could not awaken. In India there is great worship of the goddesses, the Shiva Shaktis. These Shiva Shaktis were known to destroy evils through their spiritual weapons. Baba told us that that the day would come when women would play spiritual roles of destroying evil and of uplifting the world.

I always work with the brothers as my equals because the foundation of the future lies in this spiritual equality, in love and respect. I also know that our brothers are the ones who are very wise, clever and sensible. The brothers are called Pandavs (guides), Mahavirs, the brave and courageous ones, and so even though the sisters play the leadership roles, they do so by respecting and honouring the role of the brothers as equally important and not one that is subservient.

**Dadi Janki:**

This is a Godly mission. This is a Godly family. The wonder of God's play is such that when people of the world consider women to be of no worth, God puts women in front. The amazing thing about this is that out of all the women in the world He selected the completely uneducated ones, the completely innocent ones. I have never thought that I should study, become educated and get a job or develop a career. I just knew that I had to stay at home and take care of everything in the home, but do so with integrity and honesty. I was not absorbed in the illusions and negativity that existed in the world and this is why God selected me and I allowed myself to be selected. Internally, I wanted to do what God wants me to do, so I understand that this is what I have to do. The subtle paradox is that I don't have a choice and yet at the same time it is not imposed on me either. No one can force me by saying that this is what you have to do. My heart tells me that this is what I have to do.

This is not about pushing others aside and putting myself forward. Even in the early days of the Organisation, when the ratio was 100 sisters to one brother, the role of the brother would be considered a very important role. The few brothers who were with us at the beginning had more of a public relations role. Their role was to go out and meet with leaders in the community, such as commissioners and collectors. Baba put the sisters in front and the brothers also developed the talent of putting the sisters in front. In a world where men were considered to have a lot of authority and domination, the brothers were placed in a situation in which to learn to develop regard for the sisters as well as to put them in front. At the present time, our brothers are very well educated with a lot of experience of what is happening in

the world but yet they have a lot of respect for us, the Dadis. I have witnessed in our meetings that the brothers would go into lengthy discussions but when one of the Dadis gives a suggestion, it is considered with a lot of regard and many times there is the exclamation of how incredible the input has been. The responses from the Dadis are truly valued and the brothers are not hesitant to express their feelings of amazement at the unique perspective of such contributions.

The brothers have intellectual power and the sisters have the subtle power of faith. These two powers maintain an effective balance, as both are essential. It has been remembered in Indian mythology that brothers are pandavs and sisters are shaktis. The pandavs are very brave and strong and the shaktis take power from God and become empowered to inspire others.

The beauty of equality is to see and respect each one's role and to recognise that each one's role is very wonderful. This is possible because God is between and so no one can use his or her own ideas in a selfish manner.

#### **Dadi Gulzar:**

In the area where the founder lived, women played a very much secondary role in society. They were not allowed outside, they were as if locked up indoors, surrounded by four walls. They were required to dress in a specific way, covered from head to toe with just enough open space for the eyes to see! No matter how hot it was they were made to dress in this manner, sweating under very thick fabric. Brahma Baba thought, "Why is it that women are being treated in such a degraded manner? It is always men who play the role of gurus, the ones who gave spiritual teachings, but why can't women do the same? Women have the qualities of tolerance, love, renunciation and

sustenance and so why are they made to play such degraded roles?"

The other important aspect as to why women were chosen to play leadership roles in the realm of spiritual teachings is because the ideas that were being taught were very new and different. If women share spiritual knowledge in a gentle manner, it has a quieting effect on people's intellects. Even if someone disagrees with what they are saying and starts to argue, such women's response would be to quieten them, speaking in a patient and respectful manner.

The speciality of men in this Organisation is that they have very good planning intellects and a lot of knowledge about what goes on in the world so their speciality lies within this context.

Co-operation between men and women is absolutely essential. This is why we value their speciality of having a planning intellect and their experience of living and practically working in the world. We never think that we women have a higher and greater role than the men, no! I see this co-operation as being like that which occurs in the body; there is a right arm and a left arm, a right leg and a left leg, and both are necessary. It is important for the two to work together. In the same way, we recognise that men and women need to work together as agents for world benefit.

*Extracted from Living Wisdom*

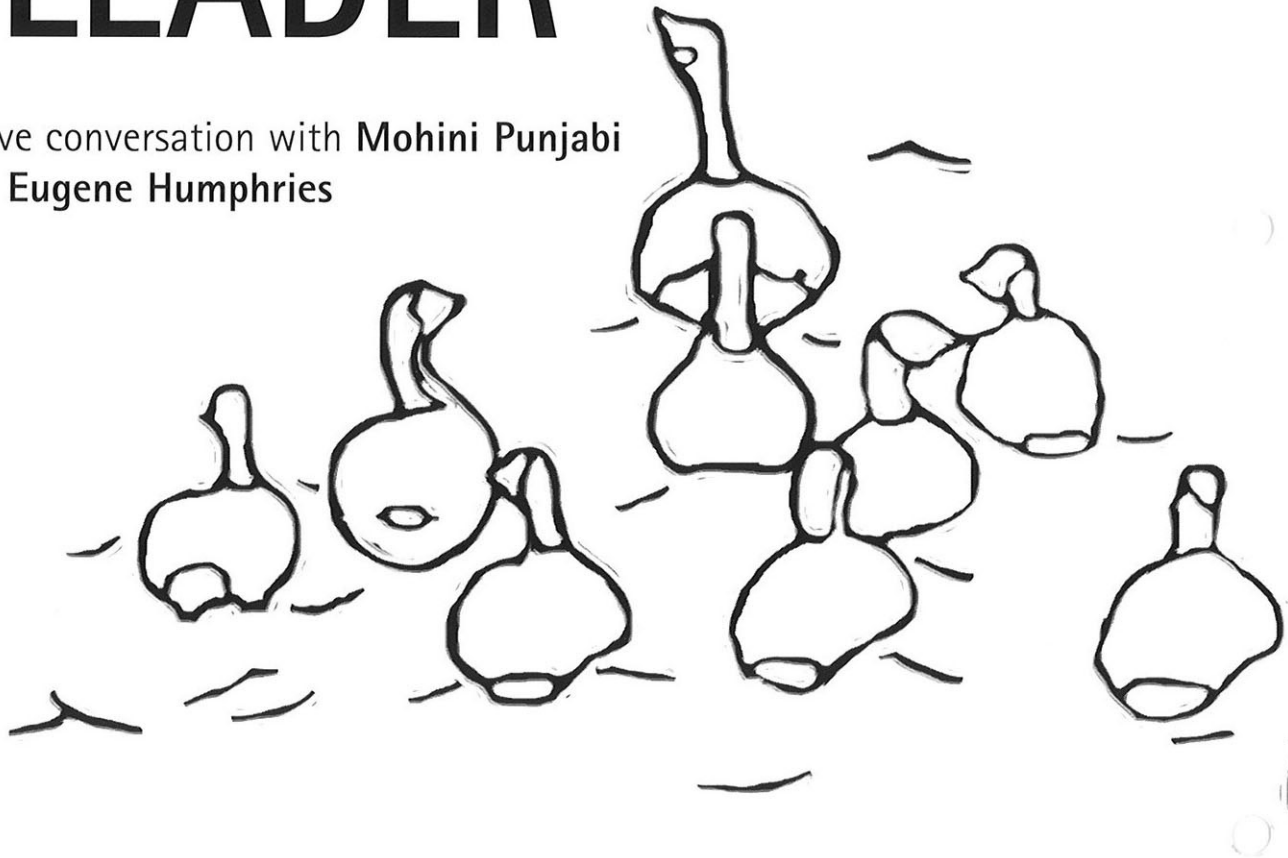
*Gayatri Naraine is the Brahma Kumaris Representative at the United Nations in New York*



# ON BEING A LEADER

ARTICLE 5

A reflective conversation with **Mohini Punjabi**  
by **Stella Eugene Humphries**



**M**ohini Punjabi is a senior spiritual leader of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organisation (BKWSO) and their Regional Co-ordinator for North and South America and the Caribbean. She is also the BKWSO representative to the United Nations. To place her leadership role in context, I will first describe some features of the BKWSO which make it an organisation of interest to the study of governance, structure, co-ordination and leadership.

The BKWSO is dedicated to providing knowledge and an environment for individual transformation in practical everyday life. It is founded on the belief that through the attainment, in action, of personal qualities such as peace,

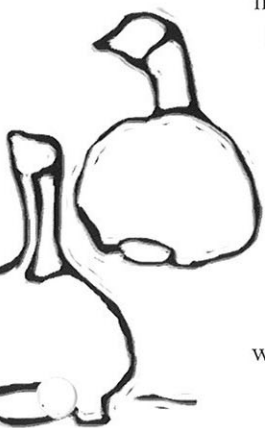
compassion, inner power and wisdom, fundamental social transformation can be brought about.

The organisation consists of self-organising centers (in most countries known as Raja Yoga Meditation Centres) which are run by volunteers. Each Raja Yoga centre provides the same daily classes to its students. There is no 'membership' and each individual is free to find their relationship to the organisation on a continuum from daily study to occasional participation in special programmes. Co-ordination of activities among local, national and international regional centers and the headquarters in Mt. Abu, is dynamic and regular through the internet and telephone. In addition to the daily schedule of teaching and meditation, the organisation holds special programmes for the public as well as professional groups in the arts,

sciences, medicine, government, the legal profession, education and business. It organises conferences, training workshops, concerts, retreats and lectures often in partnerships with other organisations.

**SEH:** Can you tell us a little of your own story – how you came to be a leader?

**MP:** I was a very private person and wanted to live a simple family life but the need for knowing more was within me and a sense of service was important. I had feelings of wanting to provide for myself but I also had a lot of care for people from a very early age. At first, service for me was very simple – to reach out to people and to give people whatever they need - small things. I remember in the early '60s there was an epidemic of influenza-it was very new – people did not know what the flu was. In almost every home in the large block where we lived people were sick because we did not have immunity or injections. I did not get sick - I would make tea, go door to door and serve food. India had two or three small wars with Pakistan and China and I remember reaching out to wounded people – going to hospitals and seeing what could be done.



I think an understanding of what one wants to achieve for oneself and also what one wants to do to serve others is needed in combination. It seems to me people either want to do something for others or do something for themselves, but they do not often live the combination. When I think of where I began and where the story of leadership began I discover that I sought to combine the two very specifically. I wanted both a quality life for myself and I wanted to offer myself to service.

**SEH:** You feel awareness of one's inner needs, then, is important for playing a public leadership role?

**MP:** I think the story of a successful leader begins with how one leads one's own life. Many people look to others for direction and insight. But others feel that there is some purpose they wish to fulfil. There is an inner calling that pulls and to which one has to respond. That is when learning begins.

Learning is connected with helping one's self. One should ask, "Which direction would I like to go and what

is the aim of my life. What do I want to do?" People tend not to think about their lives in this way. They accept information and norms external to them without questioning what these mean. Most people today focus on what the market wants. They think that if they study to fill the current market need, they can immediately start and earn money. But one should rather feel what guidance is within. They should look for something very special that gives fulfilment. Once one commits to following one's intuition and finding one's own inner direction, fulfilment begins to grow. Of course education needs to be connected with livelihood but job and money are secondary. Attention is first needed on connecting one's education to developing the quality of one's 'being' and not only to developing one's capacity for 'doing'. Whatever I did, I wanted first to know, "Why am I doing it? What is it bringing to me? What is it bringing to others?."

**SEH:** From where do you get your guidance and support as a leader?

**MP:** Basically my strength comes from my principles, my strength comes from learning and my strength came from my insights. I like being governed from my insights and I like to have information. I read a lot in every area economics, politics, medicine. When I have to decide something and when I have to form an opinion, or I have to give comments, I give these from inside. I like to hear the news and be informed but I do not necessarily like to be influenced to an extent that my own initiative and my own pure reasoning and my own insights get lost. I keep a distance and it helps me to discern.

Before I become a guide for others, am I a good guide for myself? If I am a guide for my self then I know where I am leading people. I feel each one has to have one's own map and one's own inner direction in life. Every human life becomes a guidance or misguidance for others. That is, whatever is spoken or whatever is done by someone will be seen by others and many will want to do the same. I am careful because I know when I do something, others will want to do it. But then when others are doing something, I remind myself not to get influenced if I don't want to do it. I won't do it even if 100 people say 'yes'. I will just do what I am internally comfortable with but without imposing that on others. The individual – even in a large organisation, and I am part of a large organisation - always has to maintain connection with the guidance of the self. Wherever I feel that I am not clear, I am not comfortable, I will go inside and I will try to find the right direction. To be guided by one's inner self and to act with the awareness that others will follow, are very, very important.

The strength of a leader should come from inside, should come from values. Their life should be governed by principles because following your principles protects your strength. When you speak the truth you only have to say it once, you don't have to try to convince. But once you speak a lie – you have to tell another 20 and still you are not able to convince. So it is more simple to be truthful, to be honest. In my heart I always hold on to honesty and truth.

**SEH:** What is your vision of a well-functioning system – towards what ideal way of organising do you lead?

**MP:** A teacher had a world map which was torn into little pieces and the teacher gave it to the students to fix. The students looked at it and wondered how could they restore it. But one of the students, within 15 minutes, had done it. He turned the map over, and on the back, there was a figure of the human body so he put the pieces together that way. He knew where everything fitted. He knew where the eyes should be and where the nose should be and so on. When he turned it over, the world was also put together. This is a metaphor for the

interdependency  
of the world of  
human beings  
– beneath the  
surface things have

a connection, the whole has  
a pattern. We should neither  
be dependent nor independent  
– instead we need to  
understand and accept the right

relationship among the parts of the whole. Each of the parts is important and has a role. Understanding this leads to right relationship. If we truly understood that the whole world is one family then abuse through power and status and greed would end.

When one thinks of family, one doesn't think only of the task. There is much more to a family than getting tasks done. A task-oriented personality sooner or later loses effectiveness as a leader because they lose the people. Mostly leaders are remembered for small things not for large things by those close to them. An ambassador for one of Caribbean islands was speaking of the ex-Prime Minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Publicly she was known as the Iron Woman - as a very strong politician. Few knew her soft side which was her true strength. He spoke of a time when he was in her Cabinet and they worked late or were doing a project at her residence. Every two or three hours she would send someone for tea. He said that such

little gestures of her care made them work day and night.

True leaders are remembered for small humanitarian acts which those close to them always appreciate and describe. But more often status and greed become very big challenges for a leader. Even praise and success is difficult for many. That is why a leader has to remember, "I am a server - I am on service."

One of the important factors I find within the BKWSO is that at its core it is a family, then it is an organisation. Because it is a very large family, we need to run it as an organisation – but we do not have presidents, secretaries etc. so it is like an organized family. This structure is very beautiful - family and organisation. It means the personal care and security of each member is really the wellbeing of the organisation.

**SEH:** What should be our attitude towards leaders today who have betrayed trust?

**MP:** There needs to be the realisation that everyone is responsible. Whatever is happening in a collective is not because of one, two, ten individuals, but because of each one of us. We are in a system. It is we who elect our leaders, we who really allow all that happens to happen. So if at the grass roots people do not empower themselves, they will always look to the leaders, blame the leaders. Both the formal leaders and the grass roots levels need to take responsibility of whatever is happening in the world. Blaming only leaders for the fate of millions is not right. Each one has to look at what is happening and ask, "How am I contributing by my actions, my thoughts, my attitudes, my choices?" If I want peace I have to ask myself, "Am I being peaceful? If I want tolerance or non-violence, I need to look where in my life I am contributing to peacelessness or violence and start to change those thoughts and attitudes and actions.

I feel that each one needs to take responsibility, not only expect rights. The contribution of each one is very important and each one needs to contribute whatever he or she can towards a better world. Everyone needs to feel, "I am a leader" in this regard. One should not only look to the leaders and follow, One needs to also take responsibility. Each one's inner leadership is important. Every individual can contribute a great deal. In this way people working with leaders and leaders working with people are equally necessary. Empowerment of each individual is very important.

**SEH:** Why are women especially prominent in leadership roles within the organisation?

**MP:** I think organisations today need leadership which is more nurturing. Women tend to have natural nurturing qualities and a balance between the head and heart. A lot of things the head will miss but the heart will not miss. Women listen to the heart. I find women serve from the heart. Being a mother is basically serving, thinking of others. Intellectual capacities can more easily be developed in today's institutional cultures, but the feminine qualities of listening to the heart and kindness are not recognised to be important. As a result, they are not developed. Because women tend to bring those qualities naturally, we can use their capacities to bring about a simple way of organising based on values.

When people come to the BKSWO, especially to the headquarters in Mt. Abu, India, they see dedication, commitment, patience. Being devoted to something in a sustained way is a very feminine quality. It is one thing to be task oriented, it is another to have long-term dedication. Some people can be task-oriented but not dedicated long-term. Women have the quality of dedication. Not that men don't have it, but women tend to have it well developed.

Many, many Indian family businesses know their success is dependent on the woman's influence. When men business leaders come to the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Mt. Abu, they see that the influence of women's leadership is missing in their organisations. Many have said to us, "If we had that we would also grow like you are growing." They can feel this balance of the head and the heart.

Our founder taught that if you want the organisation to be whole in the sense of balanced, women should be the leaders. He placed women in leadership roles from the beginning. Leaders need to be people with a good rational mind and well developed capacities of the heart. These qualities can become balanced in each one, man or woman. It is only now when the feminine qualities are not valued in the world that the balance needs to be restored. This is what we are doing here, bringing balance between the head and the heart.

**SEH:** Can you suggest some practices people could experiment with?

**MP:** One of the practices we use is to pause a few times a day, maybe every two or three hours. We call this 'traffic control' or controlling the traffic of thoughts in the mind. We take a few moments to calm down, get connected

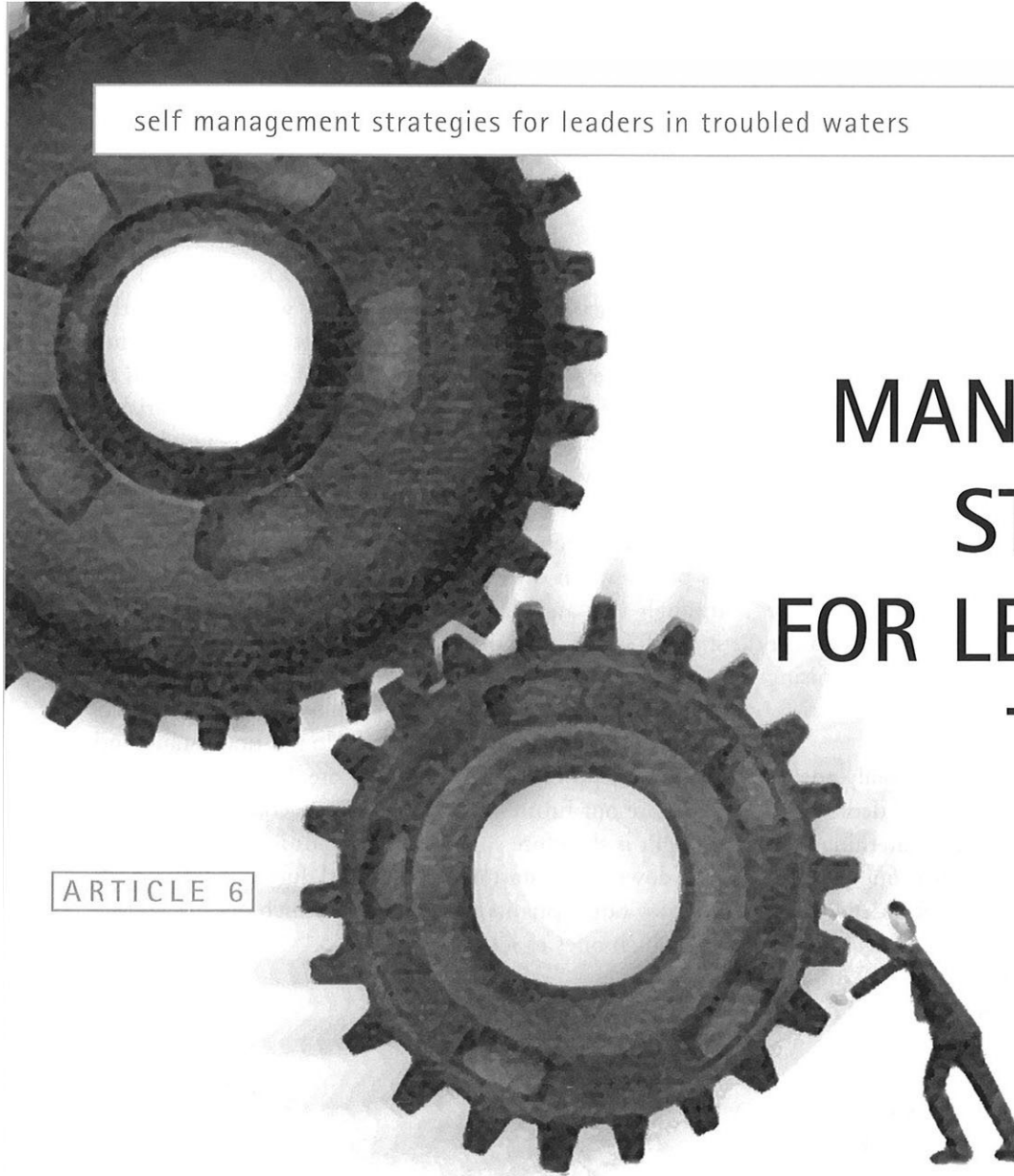
within and clear the mind of noise. Once we feel re-connected with the peaceful inner self, we go back to the task. Another regular practice is to start the day with time alone and to think or read something of inspiration and to meditate. Filling the mind with something that nourishes it, is important at the start of the day. Thinking about a virtue or a value that we can apply that day is a good morning practice. Then during the day we will have an enhanced awareness of that virtue and be able to draw on its power when difficulties arise. Strength is experienced through this and day by day, with regular practice, that strength grows. We often say, "Drops make the ocean."

One of the most important things in life is to pay attention to one's thoughts. People do not understand and realise how powerful their thoughts are. With our thoughts we create our future – consciously or unconsciously. Each thought is therefore so important. This is why we need to slow down at the start of each day and during the day to get to know our thoughts and to choose which ones to engage and which ones to let go.



Related to this is how one uses time and energy. One should not need to go back and forth over the same situation in one's thoughts – one's thinking should be clean and direct, so when it is over, one is finished with the situation. Seeing the value of one's mental energy, making the effort to have clear and stable mental energy, will make it easy to take on responsibility and to stay fresh. If one allows one's mental energy to be lost, one is drained, and it is not possible to be effective. Time, thoughts and energy are inter-related personal properties to care a great deal about. These are the foundation upon which we individually and collectively create the quality of our lives and our society.





# SELF- MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR LEADERS IN TROUBLED WATERS

ARTICLE 6

Brian Bacon Summarises some of the essential methods for being a more effective leader.

**T**he reason leaders lose focus and succumb to negative attitudes and behaviour at times of crisis is related to their internal programming. We each have embedded patterns of behaviour that surface during difficult times in our lives. These are our self-programmed responses to trouble and change. All patterns are based on past experience. Some are positive and useful. Some are destructive and dysfunctional. Some are downright dangerous. Self-managing leadership means to recognise your thought patterns and mental responses. Since a person will only change direction when their understanding changes, it is necessary for leaders to recognise their embedded patterns of response and how appropriate they are in dealing with the cyclonic conditions of today's organisation.

A clear understanding of your life's purpose and a systematic approach to your inner development are the first steps towards changing dysfunctional or negative patterns. To know yourself, means not only knowing your life's purpose and values, but also to understand your tendencies. To recognise positive patterns is vital in building self-confidence and to understand negative thought patterns is the first step towards changing them.

Having now worked with more than 50,000 executives from 46 countries who have undergone the SML training since 1994, I've been able to assemble a list of the most common negative patterns that seem to



afflict leaders during times of crisis. Following each pattern is the self-management strategy that's been found helpful to deal with it.

### Pattern 1. Following someone else's truth.

**Strategy:** Know your own truth and have the courage to follow it. Clarify your own truth and purpose in life. Meaning is not something you stumble across, like the answer to a riddle or the prize in the lottery. Meaning is something you build into your life. You build it out of your own self-understanding. You find it in your past, in your passions, affections and loyalties, out of your innate talents and gifts, out of what you believe is true, out of the people you love, out of the values for which you are willing to sacrifice something. The ingredients are there. You are the only one who can put them together into that unique pattern that will be your life. You can learn from others and benefit from their wisdom but in the end, your life is your own. Only you are responsible for the choices and decisions you make in life. Let it be a life that has dignity, elegance and meaning. Find your own truth and become the captain of your soul.

### Pattern 2: Waiting for someone else to resolve your stress.

**Strategy:** Accept personal responsibility for the administration of pressure in your life. You cannot depend on any other person to relieve your tension. There is a good chance that you are the only one who can do anything to alleviate your psychological load. Don't expect your partners, your boss, your spouse or anyone else to resolve your stress. You are responsible for your inner response to change.

### Pattern 3: Choosing the wrong battles.

**Strategy:** Choose the battles that are big enough to matter, and small enough to win. A leader never reacts. He will observe, consider the situation and then act decisively. Develop the discrimination to recognise the right time and place to 'make a stand'. Having a clear understanding of your purpose is key to knowing if the battle will be worth the effort and risk. To know yourself and to know your 'enemy' is key to judging the right time and place for battle. When you decide to act, act boldly and decisively.

### Pattern 4: Worrying about what you are losing

**Strategy:** Focus on the present with the future in mind. 'Where attention goes, energy flows; where energy flows,

life grows'. If you are mentally locked in the past and worried about what you are losing, you are giving life to death. To think about what has already died is like giving more strength to death. Whoever does this ends falling.... together with the behaviours, ideas, experiences and people that have already fallen. Put a full stop to the past and move forward.

### Pattern 5: Resisting change

**Strategy:** Turn when the tide turns. Practise instantaneous alignment with life. Instead of beating your head against the hard wall of reality and thus succeed only in bruising your spirit, invest your energy in making quick adjustments. Become agile and flexible. Every organisation has to change if it is to survive and prosper. Your own decisions can do more to influence your stress level than anything that life serves up to you.

### Pattern 6: Trying to eliminate uncertainty and instability

**Strategy:** Accommodate a little more confusion in your life. Develop a greater tolerance for constant changes in your life plan, for corrections in the middle of the road and for raw surprises. Be prepared to surf on the waves of change. Think that your life has moveable walls that adjust to the immediate demands of the situation, instead of fighting to make life and work adapt to you.

### Pattern 7: Playing the victim game

**Strategy:** Accept fate and move forward. Never surrender to the seductive pull of self-pity. Acting as a victim means to threaten your future. Remain purposeful, productive and flexible. No champion ever became so without getting knocked over a few times. If you've been knocked down, stand up, pick up the pieces and begin to reconstruct your life. Remember that no wave lasts forever, but there is always another wave. When you feel washed up, it's time to either leave the beach or to get back into the surf and find the next wave.

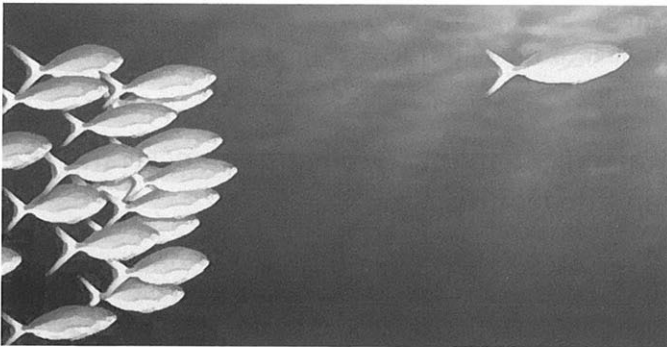
### Pattern 8: Trying to play the new game by the old rules

**Strategy:** Be detached and observe the situation objectively. Understand how the game has changed, how the priorities have been reordered. Decide in which aspects of your life and work you should focus yourself to best leverage your effectiveness. If you can't accept how things have changed, then protect your honour and

make plans to exit the game. If you choose to stay, then understand the new rules and plan your best moves.

### Pattern 9: Seeking a place of low-tension levels.

**Strategy:** Conquer tension from within. Don't fall in the trap of believing that there is any organisation today that has permanently low-tension levels. In fact, the opposite is true. You will find yourself changing one stressful work environment for another until you've learned to conquer your stress from within. You serve your best interests if you deal with tension internally and align yourself with an organisation that has the courage to support the pains of change.



### Pattern 10: Trying to control the uncontrollable

**Strategy:** Accept what cannot be changed. A surfer doesn't need to control the ocean, just ride its waves. Ask yourself if all the struggle of maintaining 'control' is worthwhile. Do you really find yourself in a position to control the situation, or will you only become emotionally tired trying? Sometimes the most mature, sensible and dignified posture is to nobly accept that which we cannot change. Position yourself correctly, make some effort and ride the waves of change, instead of trying to control the ocean of life.

### Pattern 11: Choosing your own pace

**Strategy:** Keep the same pace as the rate of change dictated by the ocean of life. Move in cadence with the time, instead of allowing yourself to take the time that you want or feel that you need. Don't stay behind. Most probably, no calm period will magically appear to give you the opportunity to eliminate the distance that your own slowness to change created.

### Pattern 12: Refusing to give up the dispensable

**Strategy:** Simplify your life and throw out all unnecessary baggage. Restructure your obligations. Get rid of excessive,

unnecessary and unproductive duties and activities that don't contribute to your focus in life or to your current work goals. Focus your efforts on doing the right things and abandon those tasks that don't count a lot, even if you do them magnificently well. Accept that you can't do everything and satisfy everyone at the same time. Let go.

### Pattern 13: Decelerating

**Strategy:** Accelerate. When caught in an ambush, the worst thing to do is to take your time looking for a place to hide. There isn't one. When exposed to hostile fire from all directions you have to act decisively and immediately. Get focused on what you believe in and get going. Put your faith in thoughtful, 'purpose-driven' action. Maximise your productivity by focusing on the things that matter. Be decisive.

### Pattern 14: Feeling powerless.

**Strategy:** Become CEO of yourself. If you have given your power away to anyone, then reclaim it immediately. Realise that you have far more control over your own life and destiny than you probably think. Now is the time for some serious control of the mind. Instead of worrying about bad things that could happen, be in charge of creating the type of future that you want. The best insurance policy for tomorrow is to make the most productive use of today.

### Pattern 15: Psychological Separation from work or family.

**Strategy:** Be in love with your work and with your family and keep the romance alive in both. Your organisation will obviously benefit if you are committed, but not so much as you and your family will. A strong commitment to your work is a present that you should give yourself and those you love. Don't let the stress of work ever put a barrier between you and your family. Stable relationships and a happy home life are keys to your success at work. No task is ever more important than the relationships it creates or the people it serves.


### Pattern 16: Learning Paralysis

**Strategy:** Reinvent yourself. Seek new challenges that amplify your experience base. Remember that one of the best techniques for stress prevention is to continue updating your skills in order to remain energised, passionate and employable.

*Brian Bacon: President, Oxford IPC Worldwide, Strategic Management Consultants*



## ARTICLE 7

Personal Experience

# FROM REBELLION TO REALISATION

**Eugenie Francoeur** is regularly stopped in the streets of Montreal by a public who admire the way she does her job as a television journalist. But her journey into media prominence and the world of 'cameras, lights and action' has not been a smooth one. She recalls how spirituality and meditation have helped

**I**n retrospect rebellion came easy and early. Even at 5 years old I wanted a fairer world. I was too young to express any political ideas but I was old enough to understand that there was something seriously wrong when I saw those pictures of kids from Biafra dying of starvation. Had it been in my own hands, I would have visited my neighbours one by one to collect food and send it to those poor children. This was my first silent rebellion against the indifference of people around me and I promised myself that one day, I would do something about it.

At 16, my mother was furious when she learned I had hitch-hiked from Montreal to Toronto to attend the Canadian Communist Party annual meeting. I devoured everything ever written by Marx, Trotsky and Lenin. Full of energy and ideas I was convinced that it was only a matter of time before world leaders would find a system that would bring benefit to everybody. Having rejected capitalist ideals and dreaming of communism in its perfect form, I was soon disappointed by its failure. In my naïvety, I had believed in a world where freedom, high moral values and equal opportunities would be the norm, only to

discover that communism had killed freedom and capitalism was destroying moral values. I rebelled against the lack of vision of political leaders.

My resolve to 'do something' was then interrupted by my own personal catastrophes. During a two year period my world collapsed. My parents split up and my younger brother died. I was devastated. My father never recovered from my brother's death. I was grieving not only for the loss of my brother but for the loss of my father. A few months later a personal relationship turned into a tragedy. I was deeply traumatised. Years of pain followed.

Despite the thick fog which seemed to descend into my life, somehow I never lost faith in my ability to survive. One day I looked at myself in the mirror, my face full of tears, and I made a promise, "From now on, I was to be in charge of my life, in control of my own destiny. I was not a victim and I will not behave like one." As I made my commitment to myself I felt a huge amount of courage within. Much later I would realise how my rebellious nature served to get me through this testing time.

The events of my personal life forced me into solitude, which I grew to love, and I began to understand that my own learning, growth and strength were nurtured by periods of silence, introspection and self reflection. I learned to become my own best friend. Studying, reading, researching and travelling kept me in an intimate conversation with myself. I didn't realise at the time, but I was becoming a therapist to myself. It kept me sane. I spent hours, often nights, writing my journal, sometimes forcing myself to look in the darkest corners within. I did not like the idea of living in avoidance.

By the age of 25 my rebellious streak had graduated from wanting to change the world to wanting to save the world! Travelling the world, I had witnessed the striking injustices between the haves and have-nots. I was repelled by the fate of thousands of men and women who were tortured, killed, raped or threatened by dictators. From then on, I rebelled against the stupidity and cruelty of people who misused their power to abuse the rights of others for their own gain. I made two decisions. Inspired by their campaign against General Augusto Pinochet, I joined Amnesty International. I couldn't ignore the atrocities his regime had committed in Chile. My second decision was to become a journalist. I felt that I had to do something positive: I could rebel, I could protest, but I could also inform. I saw journalism as a way to influence positive change.

I didn't need to go far to find heart-rending stories. In 1994 in Canada, my own country, three young Aboriginal

children - all aged under 3 - died in the flames of their house in Saskatchewan. Left alone by their parents, who were drinking at the local bar, the children had found a lighter and set fire to the house. As I watched their little burned bodies coming out in the hands of the firefighters in front of an angry crowd, I felt sadness, anger, and a sense of impotence. I tried to put my emotions aside and present an unbiased story, but it was difficult, almost impossible.

A few weeks later, on one of the reservations in the North, a woman explained to me how babies were kept quiet at night so that their mothers were able to go out and drink. A piece of cloth was soaked with petrol and placed on top of the cradle. The vapour would keep the baby asleep for many hours, but also cause serious damage to their health. Again, I was shocked: how could these things happen? I had learnt how to write a script; ask questions; speak to a camera. I had learnt how to gather information and present it to an audience, but nobody had prepared me for the emotional aspect of the job. If journalism was to be my way of informing the world I knew I couldn't react emotionally to such situations. How could I protect myself without becoming cold and distant? Was I merely feeding a voyeuristic appetite? Was I actually doing anything useful? At the maximum point of confusion and perplexity the answers to my questions appeared.

In the spring of 97 I found myself in Vancouver working on a series of stories on alternative medicine. My editor suggested I do something on meditation. After many failed attempts to find a meditation group that felt right for the story, I ended up in a pretty bungalow in East Vancouver. As soon as I walked through the door I knew instantly that my life would never be the same again. Even before any words had been exchanged, I felt a presence, a feeling of deep calm, and a warmth that reached straight into my heart. Within minutes of sitting cross-legged on the floor of the meditation room, waiting to meet the person who was to be my meditation teacher, I saw a light. It seemed massive and yet so gentle, as waves of red, white and blue light washed over my mind. I felt I was in perfect communion with something infinitely greater and more powerful than me. As I attended each weekly lesson my meditation developed, and my feelings became more profound. I experienced an incredible sense of wellbeing. Along with the method of meditation I learned to look at myself and the world in a different way. It took me some time to realise I had found a deeper set of truths and spiritual insights which have gradually transformed my life and my capabilities as a journalist, especially in the face of injustice and situations with highly emotive causes and consequences.

By far the most effective ability which meditation and spiritual insight has given me is detachment. I realised that authentic concern and care requires a form of detachment from other people's feelings and situations. Detachment has helped me to be less judgmental and less a slave to my own emotional reactions. It helps me to help others to control their emotional state. So many of the stories I cover have a highly emotional component and while a good journalist needs to 'feel' the issues in order to reflect them accurately, this is not possible unless there is the ability to stand back and distance oneself. It's a fine balance between empathy and sympathy, involvement and detachment. Meditation allows me to both rehearse this mental state, and to access the power to live it in real life situations.

*Meditation has been my training to silence my own mental chatter, and this is the key to being able to hear the more subtle vibrations of others, as well as hear the deeper, wiser, more sensitive voice of my intuitive self.*



Integrating meditation into my work as a journalist has bestowed upon me a greater awareness of all my energies and how to balance them. Television journalism means working all kinds of hours, often at a moment's notice. It easily affects sleep patterns, digestion, mental efficiency and the ability to relax. Meditation has been a godsend as it allows me to be more aware of my energy levels, push the pause button when needed, and replenish all my energies even during the most unsocial and hectic times.

Without doubt meditation has also given me a greater sense of clarity. Every story has many angles but television news only allows time for the inclusion of one or two.

Discerning quickly and accurately the right angles to focus on can take years of experience. Meditation has accelerated the development of what I call this gift of clarity.

The voice of my intuition is also much louder and clearer. Highly emotive stories means highly emotional people, often with their highly emotive agendas. Intuition is vital to quickly 'pick up' on those agendas and either avoid them or develop them in the story. Interviewing politicians also requires an ability to see through the spin and find the substance. Meditation has been my training to silence my own mental chatter, and this is the key to being able to hear the more subtle vibrations of others, as well as hear the deeper, wiser, more sensitive voice of my intuitive self.

And finally there has been a marked increase in self-confidence. Cameras, lights, studios, expectant producers, audiences of thousands if not millions watching you live, are all factors which can reduce the most confident and self-assured presenter to a bundle nerves and self-doubt. Confidence takes time to build, and even then it can fluctuate wildly. Meditation, and the self-awareness and self-control that it brings, has allowed me to tap into a deeper level of self-esteem and self worth which are not dependent on external feedback, and these are now the foundations of my self-confidence.

There is without doubt tremendous pain and suffering in the world today. On my journey from confusion to clarity I began to see that suffering is derived, not so much from circumstance or a lack of something, but from ignorance and the inability to access inner gifts of peace and love which every single human being contains. I also learned to see behind the masks of race, religion, nationality and profession and recognised that we are all spiritual beings on our own unique journeys. This has transformed my perception and attitude towards the heart rending stories which I often have to cover. I cease to identify with the pain and suffering of others because if I do, as I used to, my energy is depleted and I become of little use to anybody. I still want to help, I still want to alleviate others' pain, I still have a voice inside that wants to see the world change. The voice of the rebel remains, but it is softer voice, a more understanding voice. The voice I hear more often now is one of compassion and empathy. It is a voice that is often absent in our media dominated world today.

*Based in Montreal, Eugenie Francoeur is a television and radio journalist, reporter and researcher for CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation).*



# THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUALITY

Dr David R. Hamilton reflects on two rapidly colliding worlds ...that were never separate in the first place!

ARTICLE 8

**S**cience is finally catching up with Spirituality!

In other words, science is finally finding proof, as scientifically measurable results verified by mathematical theorems, of what many of us have known intuitively for a long time, and what eastern philosophies have been teaching for millennia.

I often wonder why things are said to be untrue until science 'proves' it. In the days of Copernicus and Galileo, it was heresy (and an offence punishable by imprisonment and even death) to suggest that the earth was not the centre of the Universe. But that is exactly what these determined souls did, and they did not escape punishment. At that time, science said that the earth was the centre of the universe and that all of the heavenly bodies revolved around it. But these men, in their own time, both motioned that the earth revolves around the sun, and that the sun revolves around the centre of the galaxy, and that there are many other galaxies in a very large universe. This is how our modern understanding currently views the cosmos.

In those times, science (and religion – they were very close) had 'proven' that the stars revolved around the earth

so how could it be otherwise? And this rigidity in science is what has often, and still does, obstruct legitimate advances in our understanding. For example, spirituality is laughed at in some 'academic' circles, healing with hands or intent is viewed as either rubbish or 'just placebo', and homeopathic and herbal remedies are branded as snake oil. But in truth, as I understand science (and I have worked as a senior pharmaceutical scientist, have studied quantum physics and mathematics, and now research bio-electromagnetics, which is the study of consciousness on biology), 'classical science' has simply not found proof...yet! But that does not make it wrong. The earth has always revolved around the sun; just because science hadn't proven it didn't mean that it didn't happen. It just took scientists a while to notice. And so it is with spirituality and science.

It has taken a while for it to notice, but that is exactly what it is doing and at this point it is sitting up very quickly and attentively taking note of what is going on.

In most medical trials, somewhere between 30% and 90% of people are cured because they believe that they are getting a new drug where, in actual fact, they are taking a sugar tablet that is made to look like a drug. It's called the placebo effect.

Let's say a new drug for migraines is being tested. Scientists within the pharmaceutical company who invented the new drug will have set up a trial to test how good the drug is. They will give the drug to half of the patients and they will give a sugar tablet, made to look and taste like the drug, to the other half. In this way they theoretically should see how good the drug works because no one should be healed from the sugar tablet. But it doesn't quite work as the trial is designed.

Suppose there are 1000 people participating in the trial. The drug will be given to 500 of them and the sugar tablet (placebo) will be given to the other 500 and no one, not even the doctors, knows who's getting what. At the end of the trial a good drug will have cured 450 people of their migraines. But the sugar tablet will have cured somewhere between 150 and 450 people, depending upon the nature of the drug and the conditions of the trial.

These people cured themselves, through faith that they were getting the new drug. And this is seen in trials for cancer, HIV, irritable bowel, candida, ME, high blood pressure, infections, etc, etc, etc. The common factors are Faith and Intent to get better. But science, up until now, has struggled a little with that concept so the placebo effect is largely ignored. In the industry it is referred to as 'just the placebo' without giving a thought for the fact that thousands of people are cured annually through this faith.

When Christ cured the sick, he sometimes said, "Do you believe that I can do this?" and upon hearing the sick person say "Yes", he would reply, "Your faith has made you whole. Go in peace." And the same is written about other great masters in many other religions. The common theme is faith.

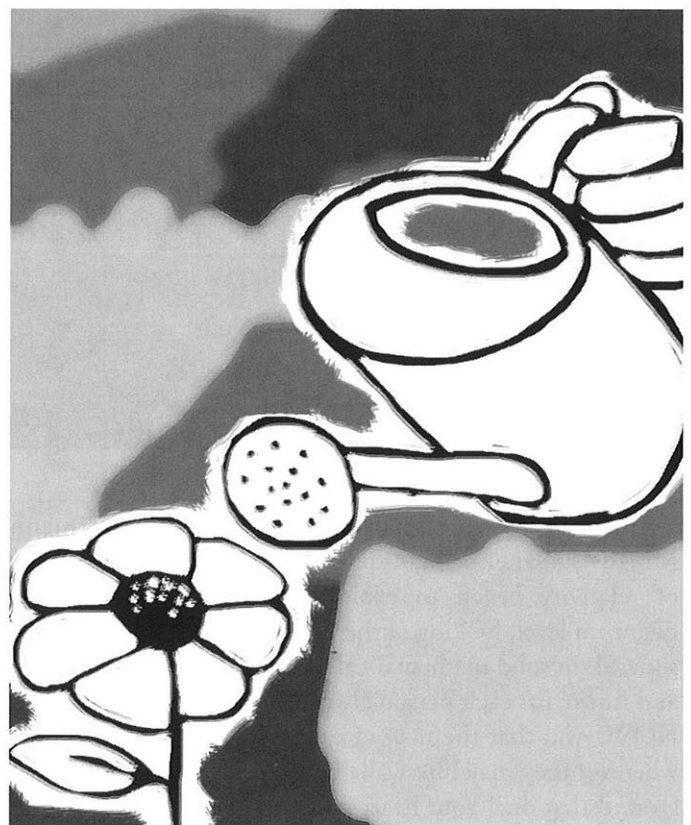
A large number of scientific studies have been published about the effect of the mind on the body and most have been about meditation and some now are looking deeper, at the level of DNA. There is currently somewhere in the region of 500+ scientific articles on meditation, hence science is now beginning to take notice. These academic reports have noted that meditation: reduces cortisol (a stress marker), increases melatonin (a calming hormone), reduces the rate of aging (some studies have shown that the rate of cellular aging of a person meditating for 20 minutes a day for 5 years is the same as for someone 12 years younger), lowers cholesterol, reduces heart disease (most studies show 80%-95% reduction), and reduces the chances of cancer by 50%. Science is sitting up and taking note because meditation is where We (the meditators), affect the physiological and biological systems of our bodies through Intent!

Some researchers have recently demonstrated the effects of intent on human DNA, the building block of life. They took two jugs of water containing DNA and focused intent into one of them and not into the other. Then they analysed the DNA using a technique called Ultraviolet Spectrophotometry. They found that the DNA that was in the water, which had intent focused upon it, was changed. It was 'stronger'. The intent that was used was the intent to heal (to do good, to make better, Love).

In similar experiments, scientists focused intent into jugs of water and used them to water plants. They found that the plants watered using healed water had more chlorophyll (the green pigment) and they grew faster. In one amazing experiment, two healers focused intent upon some plants at a distance of 500 kilometers. The experiment was performed by a USA university team who hooked the plants up to sophisticated measuring equipment.

They found that, at the instant that the healers focused upon the plants, they started to grow faster. At the end of the experiment their growth rate was 600% faster than other plants not involved in the test.

Many of us have seen the effects of healing. We have watched people get better after Reiki, Sekhem, massage, therapeutic touch, and many other forms of healing, as well as from taking vibrational and homeopathic remedies. We have also seen the benefits of prayer. One major study



on prayer a few years ago saw 150 people having invasive cardiac surgery. Half of them (75 patients) were prayed for (unknown to themselves). Shortly after the operations the 75 that were prayed for got home early – their recovery rates were 50% - 100% faster. We know that it works, and science is catching up, fast.

Science is looking to quantum physics for an explanation of the spiritual. They notice that if they look at any of our cells under a microscope that they see very small parts, and that if they look at them up close they are made of even smaller bits. But if they keep going inside each of the parts, they get to molecules (DNA, proteins, enzymes), atoms, then they reach subatomic particles at the quantum level. When they get to the subatomic particles they notice that they are so small that they are made up of mostly empty space (about 99.9999% space). In fact, there is more space (relatively), between two particles in an atom than there is between two stars in the cosmos. Quantum Physicists crash particles into each other in multi-million pound particle accelerators only to discover that the presence of the experimenter (observer, us), affects the outcome of the experiment. They are faced with a paradox because they do not know if what they are seeing is really how it is, because our consciousness affects the outcome of the experiment.



Albert Einstein's mathematics teacher, Hermann Minkowski, after being inspired by Einstein's special theory of relativity began to explore the mathematics of the quantum level, looking at the nature of space and time. He showed, in solid mathematical terms, that the past, present, and future for each person always meet at one single point. NOW. And that the now of each person is always located wherever they may physically be, now. Try to get your head around that one! Your heart is already there!

Many spiritual masters have taught that now is all that exists, and many of us have discovered a seeming timelessness in our deep meditations.

Physics and Mathematics have also proven that time has no preference. It runs just as happily backwards as it runs forwards. We experience it forwards because that is how we perceive reality, but have you ever wondered why you might have an intuition to choose one path over another? Maybe a future self is sending unconscious messages (as soul fragments) back through time saying, "Yes, good choice. That's a good one. Follow that path my friend." You suddenly get the feeling that choosing that path would be great.

Science has also demonstrated that everything is connected to everything else. In other words, we are all one. Another good one for Quantum Physics! So everything you do affects everything else because it's all connected.....and its holographic. In other words, everything is contained within the smallest bit. All of it! "Break a stick and I Am there, lift a stone and I Am there, for the kingdom of God is within you." JC

So, science is catching up in many ways. The earth is shifting so fast at the moment and you are affecting it right now. How you lead your life; the thoughts you think, the sentences you speak, and the way that you act, affects the world right now. Are you peaceful now? Are you loving now? Now is the time to take responsibility.

We know, and science is also acknowledging, that we are all one. Everyone is made of the same stuff, and our every action comes from our own individual part of the whole that makes us unique. Love is the energy of unity, and oneness. That is our true nature. When we choose to act peacefully, and lovingly, we come to know that love is our true state. And that knowing affects people you come into contact with. Maybe your presence is the greatest gift you can offer them, because it helps them to know who they are too. Maybe, by taking responsibility for ourselves we help others to do the same, and maybe, just maybe, we can turn our world into the one we see in our dreams and visions. Maybe just being you is all you need to do to make the world a better place.

*Dr David Hamilton is a medical and research scientist in the pharmaceutical industry and a co-founder of Spirit Aid.*



# SPIRITUALITY, RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION

ARTICLE 9



Maureen Chen sets out to separate some of the threads between three easily confused areas.

**I** am spirit. I presently inhabit a body. In this life it happens to be female and caucasian. However, this does not in any way define who 'I' am. I am my thoughts, experiences. Spirituality is to live from the core of my being. My original nature is peace, love, happiness and wisdom. I seek to maintain this original essence whilst experiencing the world through this body.

I actively engage in spiritual study to empower myself to be able to meet this challenge. Spirit is very pure, very subtle. It is affected by what I eat, the atmosphere, the company I keep, etc. To maintain a spiritual attitude I follow various disciplines such as early morning meditation, regular study, a vegetarian diet, etc. I try to maintain as much purity as I can in this regard. I can hear your question: what do you mean by purity? I would say it is a state free from illusion. The illusions we came under are anger, greed, lust, attachment and ego. The illusion is that we think that we gain something from these but actually we are under their spell.

Learning from the experiences of mystics throughout the ages, I have experienced for myself that the yogic disciplines help to keep my mind free of negative influences which in some way or other are all fear-based. It has been said that there are only two motivations for everything we do – love and fear. Spirit is love. Ego is based on insecurity. Some traditions deny the existence of a separate Self in order to quell the ego. In Raja Yoga we term these two states soul conscious and body conscious. Freedom is when we can live in the body, in the world, in a state of soul consciousness. Freedom is discipline. I follow the above mentioned yogic disciplines religiously as I find that this is the easiest way to maintain them. I also find that when I break these disciplines my stability of mind and wellbeing is affected and becomes influenced.

Traditions taught certain disciplines they had experienced helped them on their path. These were followed by millions of people for centuries, however, at some point, we forgot why we were following the disciplines and merely followed out of fear or because we were too lazy to really experiment ourselves and chose to

believe the experiences of others. Ultimately we did not even realise why the discipline was being followed. Another reason for our present state of affairs in religion, where we find so many people following without any understanding, is that fear is used to teach. This was probably found to be much easier for the masses and many prefer to follow, just as most people would rather hand their body over to a doctor when they have an ailment rather than take responsibility for their recovery.

I was once asked when someone was serving wine, "You are not allowed to drink this are you?" I replied, "It is not that I am not allowed. I know the effects on my mind and I choose not to drink it." I make a tremendous amount of effort to discipline my mind because I have a great belief in the power of the mind and how it can be used to help alleviate suffering – both my own suffering and the suffering of others. My core interest since childhood has been the cessation of suffering. I am pursuing my interest with dedication just as a teacher, doctor, artist, athlete or scientist may do. These professional people follow certain disciplines religiously in pursuit of their goal.

There are many meanings for the word religion but basically they come down to return to the origin. They also have another meaning to adhere to principles as in 'to follow religiously'. Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of religion was that somewhere along the line we have 'put the fear of God' in believers. They are threatened with dire consequences if they break their disciplines in the belief that this huge, all powerful figurehead would cast "His" (it has generally been a patriarchal figurehead) wrath on them. Actually, the fact is that breaking any disciplines will have consequences. If an athlete does not maintain his diet and exercise routine there will be loss. I think we need to bring back the concept of self responsibility for our actions and take God out of the punishing role which I have never believed was His/Hers. The fear imposed on 'believers' has even been used to control huge masses of people.

Spirituality is the courage to change myself. Because of the unhealthy pre-occupation with fear and guilt we have tried to push these emotions out of our lives. There are also healthy aspects to these inner voices just as there are healthy and unhealthy desires. Fear and guilt need to be used constructively and within limits. It probably would only need about 5-10 minutes for this process and then we would need to respond appropriately rather than just push them aside. If we listen to our conscience, and develop a relationship with the self through the conscience, these voices of fear and guilt would be helpful to our development. We need to judge ourselves appropriately.

Deep down, when we are centred, we really do know what is right or wrong.

Institutions were developed in the name of religion and people handed over their power or in many cases were stripped of their power, including their right to believe whatever they felt to be their truth. Religious leaders have often claimed to be endowed to hold the authority of God or Truth, and the right to judge the people. Others were not controlling to quite the same extent. They genuinely wished their people to experience the love and power of the faith. They took the scriptures literally and genuinely believed that it was in the best interest of the people to follow the scriptures religiously. The only trouble is: whose interpretation is to be followed? When doubts were raised, religious leaders often became afraid that their followers would be cursed if they raised such doubts to God or the systems introduced into the institution.

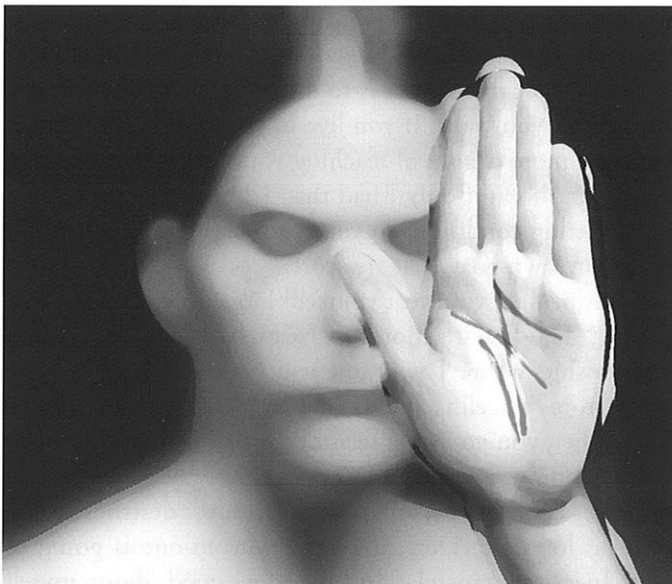
Scott Peck makes an interesting observation in his book, *A Different Drum*. He proposes that many people find themselves at some point in chaos and that they seek an institution in order to get their lives sorted out. They may have lost confidence in their ability to do this for themselves and are grateful to have someone tell them what to do and what to think. However, after some years they begin to ask questions, "Why do we do this? Why do we eat this? Why do we wear this?" Fearing a breakdown in the system many religious leaders panic and try to suppress this doubt to bring things under control. If people were allowed to question and come to a very personal understanding based on their own experience or reasoning they could evolve from a believer to a kind of mystic.

The destination in Raja Yoga is to attain self-sovereignty. It does not encourage people to be 'followers'. Experience is the highest authority. Truth is a personal experience. When we align ourselves with our truth we are following our dharma. Dharma is often translated as religion. The sanskrit root dhar means to uphold. Dharma, to uphold one's own way of righteousness. Freedom to be one's self and not to be influenced by the atmosphere, someone or something is the attainment of this self-sovereignty ... free to be.

I recently attended a workshop entitled 'Spirituality in Social Work' at the Hong Kong University. Part of the workshop was designed to clarify the difference between religion and spirituality. The outcome was interesting considering the background of the participants. There were approximately 30 of us and of those I would say 25 were Christians/Catholics.

Spirituality	Religion
Free flowing	Structured
Androgenous	Male dominated
Emancipating	Oppressive
Metaphysical	Conforming
Individual	Institutionalised
Being	Doing
And	Or
Equality	Patriarchal
Liberating	Social Control
Transcendent	Culturally defined
Bringing Together	Separating
Applies to all	Applies to some
Inclusive	Exclusive
Flexible	Dogmatic
Expansive	Restrictive
Spirit	Ego

Moving on to superstition, I would like to cite just one example, that of the Australian Aborigines. In essence, as this is such a vast subject, I would say that superstition is fear based beliefs unrelated to truth. Fear and Love are the two spectrums between superstition and spirituality. Superstition may be found in religion when there is a basis of fear and when we blindly follow and it is not related to our experiences. It was interesting to note the comments of Master Jing Yin, the Director for the Centre for Buddhist Studies at HK University, “Our mission is to dispel superstitions.”



How can we judge something to be superstition? People like the Australian Aborigines have often had their spirituality characterised as a collection of superstitions and primitive myths. They were seen to be ‘living in darkness’ by Christian settlers in Australia. However James Cowan, author of *Mysteries of the Dreamtime* writes, “I learnt to respect the uncluttered wisdom of their thought, their ability to derive so much spiritual knowledge from what appeared to be an uncritical respect for tradition. I soon learnt it was in fact reverence. Their concept of sanctity I found to be far more complex and far-reaching than any we might find in the universal religions.”

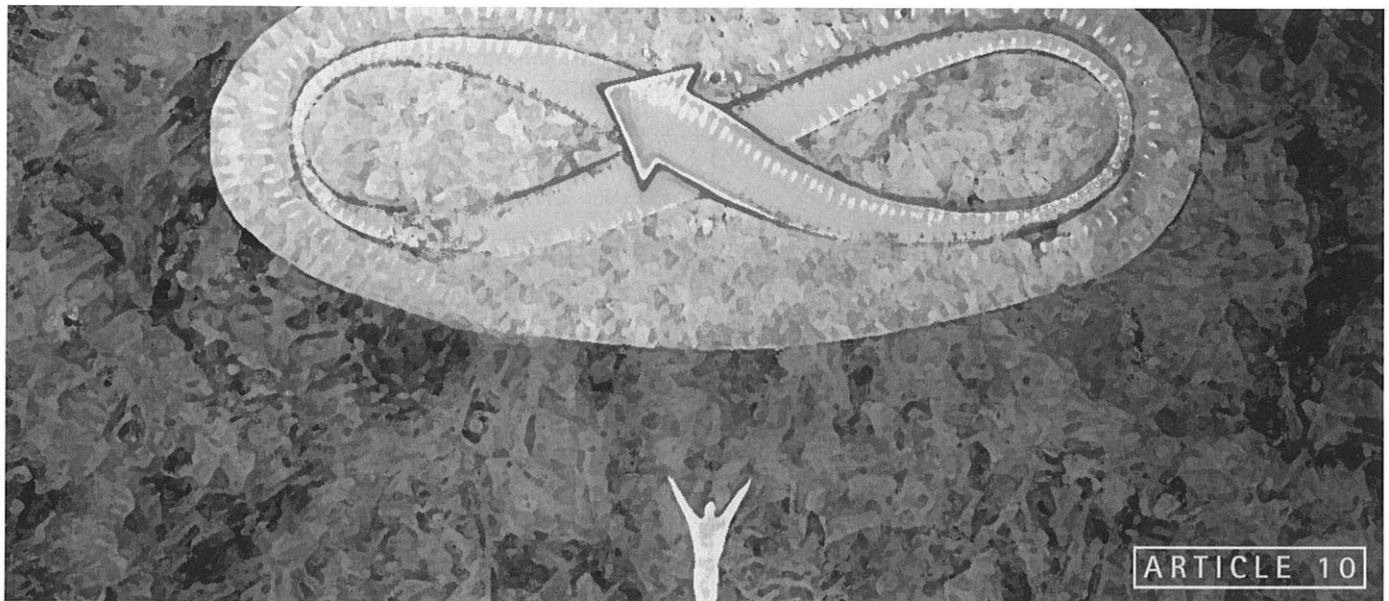
The belief that we are evolving has created an attitude that Aboriginal culture is primitive and undeveloped and yet their sacred place or temple is the landscape itself, i.e. the earth, the rock-forms, tree, plains, mountains, etc. They see the land, insects, animals and humans as all intricately linked in the Dreaming. There is no primacy in this. Mankind and nature are co-equal partners. The Dreamtime conveys knowledge of the Primordial Event and denotes the possibility of full participation in it by the individual. It is a state of mind – a return to the source. The symbolism is designed to bring on an ecstatic state. Their entire culture is dedicated to the sanctity of life.

Communities have conveniently tried to protect and preserve their traditions by calling anything different a cult or superstitious. For example, the Sederunts were threatened by the non-economic world view held by the nomadic Aborigines who do not believe in possessing anything. The nomad carries his whole world within himself. Is this not a core spiritual law: that we can never own anything or anyone? Is this a fact or a judgement? As with most traditions the Aboriginal people have seen elements of superstition creeping in, however they have been ‘proud exemplars of an ancient race who have allowed religion and religious belief, to saturate their lives’.

I would like to conclude in saying that spirituality is about living in the awareness of the non-physical self. In this consciousness we experience an inter-connectedness to all things. Religion supports this endeavour. However when we are not in this state of love our motives become fear based and our actions are based on superstition. Spirituality is based on experience, religion on tradition and superstition on fear.

*Maureen Chen is the Co-ordinator of the Inner Space Retreat Centre in Wilton, New South Wales, Australia*





# STOP SCORING OWN GOALS

Graham Harris and Julie Thomas explain how to train and support the best in ourselves.

**O**

wn goals are things that stop us from reaching we want to obtain. Sometimes they happen accidentally or because we try too hard. They can be caused by not concentrating at the right time, not doing the job properly. When I don't have focus, when I am out of tune with what's going on, when I do something which is against the direction of where I am going or should be going, I have scored 'an own goal'.

So the first thing I need to sort out is, "What's my focus? Why am I here? What do I want out of life?" When I know my focus then I become aware of my capabilities.

We usually do it the other way around, we work out what our capabilities are and out of that emerges the focus. It's like a flea circus. How do you train fleas? It's easy, first you'll collect them and put them all in a matchbox. They keep jumping up and down till they get a headache, and all of a sudden the noise stops. You take them out of the box and they'll only jump 'that' high. How many of us are like that? We've only learned to jump this high. When they take the box away we're still only jumping that high. In this scenario, the focus only comes out of capabilities. When you have zeal, enthusiasm and focus then you've got energy. If you've got the focus then you'll pick up the capabilities on the way.

Most of us, in the beginning, don't have a clue on what meditation is. Gradually, the focus grows when meditation grows. Some people get close to their goal, then at the last minute they'll pull back. When we do this again and again,

it becomes a pattern. Examine and check – what are you creating? If you know where you are going, then start looking at where the own goal is occurring. Is the own goal because the enthusiasm is gone? It is important to understand our focus or we can get lost on the way. The capabilities and skills will develop as the focus is pursued. An important distinction is to differentiate what you need from what you want. If you live in the need box then you have got more chance of reaching your focus. If you live in your want box ('if only I had this, I'd be happy',) and you start putting conditions to your own happiness, which is a common 'own goal' that we score.

Examine how you treat yourself! How do you treat other people? The best relationship I can have is a win-win, a relationship where I win and you do too, we both walk away from it feeling good. In win-lose, I've won you've lost. When you go into a relationship, do you go into it to win-win or win-lose? In lose-win, basically I give in, in order for the other person to win. The most destructive one of all is lose-lose. Here, if I can't win no-one is going to win. In a win-win relationship, I feel good about myself

and I feel good about where I'm going, my focus and what I'm trying to achieve. When I do fall off the ladder, I don't immediately beat myself up, I just stop to think and examine what's happened.

If you look at a football team, you could see it as a competition of winning and losing. Another way is to see my role as a player in the team where I perform my best. After a major race or game, the question that the sportsmen ask themselves or their coach is, "Did I perform my personal best this time?" It doesn't matter if I came 2nd or 3rd, what matters is did I perform or exceed my personal best? Most of us in life don't even know what our personal best is. Win-win for me is living in my personal best and thinking to myself, when did I do something that I really know wasn't the best thing I could have done. If we all play our personal best, the result is the team plays best and the best team wins.

Another way of playing a win-lose game is by having professional foul, if I can't win I'll do something to stop you winning. How many times do I create a professional foul? It can be something as easy as pouting or sulking. How many times do I make people feel sorry for me? I lose, you win, I give away my power all the time and I wonder why I can't do it.

It's about how I think about myself. Power is the basis of our thoughts. If you understand the power of your thoughts you would be frightened to think. When I was in full flight and I really rolled on a negative basis about someone, it was destructive. I did not even have to open my mouth. I've really had to work hard so that I don't jump to a conclusion about people, when someone looks and speaks a particular way. Instead I step back and stay in a positive place. We score our own goals by thinking negatively. How often has someone said to you, "Don't look at me that way, I know what you're thinking."

A step before changing your behaviour is to change your thoughts. You can change your thoughts through the gardening of the brain. The first thing you have to do is recognise the weeds in your life. Dig out the weeds and replace them with a flower. Recognise, remove and replace. Work always with the positive, not with the negative. The brain doesn't understand the word 'no'. One of the biggest cons when you're playing golf is to say to your partner "Don't hit that tree," then watch the ball hit that tree! The brain doesn't hear 'don't', all it hears is 'hit the tree'.

The first thing is to understand - who I am. I accept that I'm more than this body. What I am is peace, love, happiness. These are my natural states. The more you focus

on these qualities, the more energetic you are. The more you replace negative with positive thoughts, the more energy you have. Do you know how electricity works? No, but you use it. So, I don't need to know how it works to use it. It's the same with this, I don't need to know where it comes from or how it works in order to use it.

Most things we do are habits. I cannot change my behaviour unless I replace it with something. I cannot change a thought unless I replace it with something. In other words I have to unlearn it rather than analyse it. If you use the word 'why' the response is usually 'because', which means I'm now defending myself. If I keep working out why this happened to me, I don't change anything, I just get more data. If I ask myself what made me do that then I get some information to work with. Analysing is useful history but it doesn't help me change. It helps me wallow. Focus is about reaching my potential.

The understanding behind replacing hatred with peace or love, is that we all have our roles to play and when you see someone with behaviour that causes an emotion of hate inside of you, just be grateful it's their role and not yours. This understanding really helped me because it stopped me judging. I look at the other person thinking I'm glad I don't have to play your role. This is accepting. It's a process. If I can do it for one second then all I have to do is work on how I can do it for a longer period. If you're going to start to meditate, aim for 5 secs first then build up.

Who am I? I am an energy source. Imagine this source composed of female and male energies. The female energies are love, peace, happiness, truth and purity and we all have these energies in us. The male energy's job is to make these work and put them into action. The problem arises when we think that the male energy can do without the female energy. I can do it, I don't need any help. When the male energy focuses on controlling and doing, then it becomes illusionary and negative. Most of us search for peace. I must know it exists in me, to be searching for it again. If I can replace my ego with humility what would happen to me? If I could replace my anger with peace, attachment to things for love for things, if I could replace my greed to giving, what would happen? Once I have a focus which comes not from capabilities but from who I really am, then I understand that who I am really is this loving, peaceful, pure, truth, happy, individual. Every time I think, I'm not that, I've just scored an own goal.

*Prior to taking up residency in the Canary Islands Graham Harris and Julie Thomas were management and personal development coaches to directors and managers and their teams.*



# THE AHA! MOMENT

Mike George reminds us how quiet moments of introspection and reflection can provide the silent inner space for the dawn of a new view.

**W**e all know the AHA! moment. It arrives as a profound insight into a problem we are struggling to resolve, or a flash of clarity about a difficult situation that we are facing.

Most inventors will testify to an AHA! moment as the breakthrough to seeing exactly how their new creation will take shape. Numerous scientists will recall when they received the first fresh impulse in the formulation of a new theory from somewhere within their consciousness. And many successful business people often tell of an uninvited AHA! which turned into a crucial business decision or completely new direction, contributing much to their perceived success.

In the moment of the AHA you are suddenly blessed, for no apparent reason, with a realisation of what is exactly the right thing to do or say, or not, as the case may be. It is accompanied by a deep sense of certainty. You do not need to think about it. In fact, if you do think about it you are beginning to doubt it, and doubting will diminish its power.

The AHA! moment or, as some have described it, the 'eureka experience', usually comes when you cease to struggle mentally and intellectually for solutions or answers to a perceived problem or challenge. Your mind and intellect are relaxed, open and receptive to new ways of seeing. Some would call it an intuitive realisation, as the voice of our innate inner wisdom speaks in response to the images and perceptions it has received.

## The AHA! Process

As the mind receives the challenges of the external world or the 'component parts' of a perceived problem, the intellect touches, wrestles and feels all the ingredients, searching for clarity, sense and meaning. As it does so it sends those ingredients into the subconscious. It is there that the deepest intelligence, the wisdom of the soul, receives the images, feelings, perceptions and experiences. In its wisdom, the soul meets, mirrors and quietly sifts and sorts, outside conscious awareness. In a subtle, silent and subconscious process the soul gives form to a response which has the tendency to be both simple and wise. As it bubbles to the surface, often at the least expected moments, it arrives within conscious awareness and it releases an energy which can be anywhere on a scale from relief to exhilaration. Eyebrows twitch, and the inner smile of knowingness finds its way onto the face. The AHA! moment has arrived. We all know the beauty of this moment.

## How to induce an AHA! moment

At the very core of our consciousness there is a font of wisdom waiting to be rediscovered and mined like a seam of gold underground. Unfortunately the emotional habits of our modern age called worry, anger and fear create so much inner noise that discerning the quiet voice of intuition is like trying to hear the refined song of a nightingale in a jungle. So the first step is learning to still the mind and listen without tension to the voice of the soul. For thousands of years meditation has been the acknowledged method to clear the internal clutter and dim the noise of thoughts and feelings, which then allows our wisdom to do its inner work of shaping insight and realisation.

If meditation is a step too far and too deep, then creative visualisation is another way to induce a state of inner peace. On the television screen of our minds we can create any image. If the image is calm and warm this will spread to the deepest recesses of our being, once again allowing the natural creation and the easy birth of insight and realisation.

AHA! moments can change your life and the lives of others, but only if they are instantly applied or acted upon. Only in action lies their power not only to generate positive change but to move you into the next stage, or a new phase, of your life.

## Invoking the AHA! Moment

Find a quiet corner. Sit still in your body. Lovingly command your mind to slow down. Remind yourself of the issue upon which you would like clarity. Then drop it. Visualise a calm scene in nature. Invite that calm to permeate your consciousness and your body. Now wait. As if you have all the time in the world, just wait, watch and welcome any thought or feeling that comes. Then let it go. Grasp nothing with your mind. After ten to fifteen minutes carry on with whatever you were doing. Your AHA! may arrive either during your meditation or later, while you are getting on with your life!

*Mike George is a writer and editor of Heart & Soul. The above is an extract from his book The 7 AHAs of Highly Enlightened Souls, published by O-Books in June 2003*



# Peaceful Inspirations

Co-operate with others.

Create Co-operation.

Teach co-operation.

Inspire co-operation and you will find your workplace a space to learn and a place for personal growth. Your motivation will shift from earning to learning.

• • •

In order to create good relationships....

With your mind think about what you have to learn from others

With your eyes, look into the good qualities of others

With your words, recognise, value and appreciate their accomplishments

With your actions, co-operate and do something for others

• • •

Our society encourages distraction and evasion as a means to experience happiness. But actually this takes you far away from yourself and just postpones dissatisfaction.

The true solution is to concentrate on what nourishes spirit and gives you life.

• • •

To love simple things is humility. It means to respect all that life presents to you. It means to appreciate and value everything appropriately. It means to remain focussed on your inner peace and not lose your sense of personal well being.

• • •

Why do you like sunsets so much? Because they take you beyond your physical dimension. You experience peace and silence. You sense that time stops, and you understand what eternity means. It awakens your dormant spirituality. Whenever you have the chance, sit in front of a sunset and relax. Do not analyse. Only watch and observe and let profound feelings of peace emerge.

• • •

You are what you think. Think that you are a being of peace and peace will become your personality. Share good news with others. Always have something interesting prepared to share with those you meet. Remember to have a peaceful thought at least once a day.

*Extracted from the The Gift of Peace by Enrique Simo  
Available from bkpublications.com*

# heart&soul

Insights and Inspirations for Living in the Light

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is an international organisation working at all levels of society for positive change. Its lecturers and teachers, all of whom are volunteers, conduct a wide range of educational programmes and activities for the development of human and spiritual values through about 5,000 branches in some 87 countries.

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