

heart & soul

INSIGHTS AND INSPIRATIONS FOR LIVING IN THE LIGHT

ISSUE 19

celebrating 30 years

THE POWER OF LOVE

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Dadi Janki tells us what she thinks about love

CREATIVITY AND SPIRITUALITY
Neville Hodgkinson connects spirituality and creativity and science

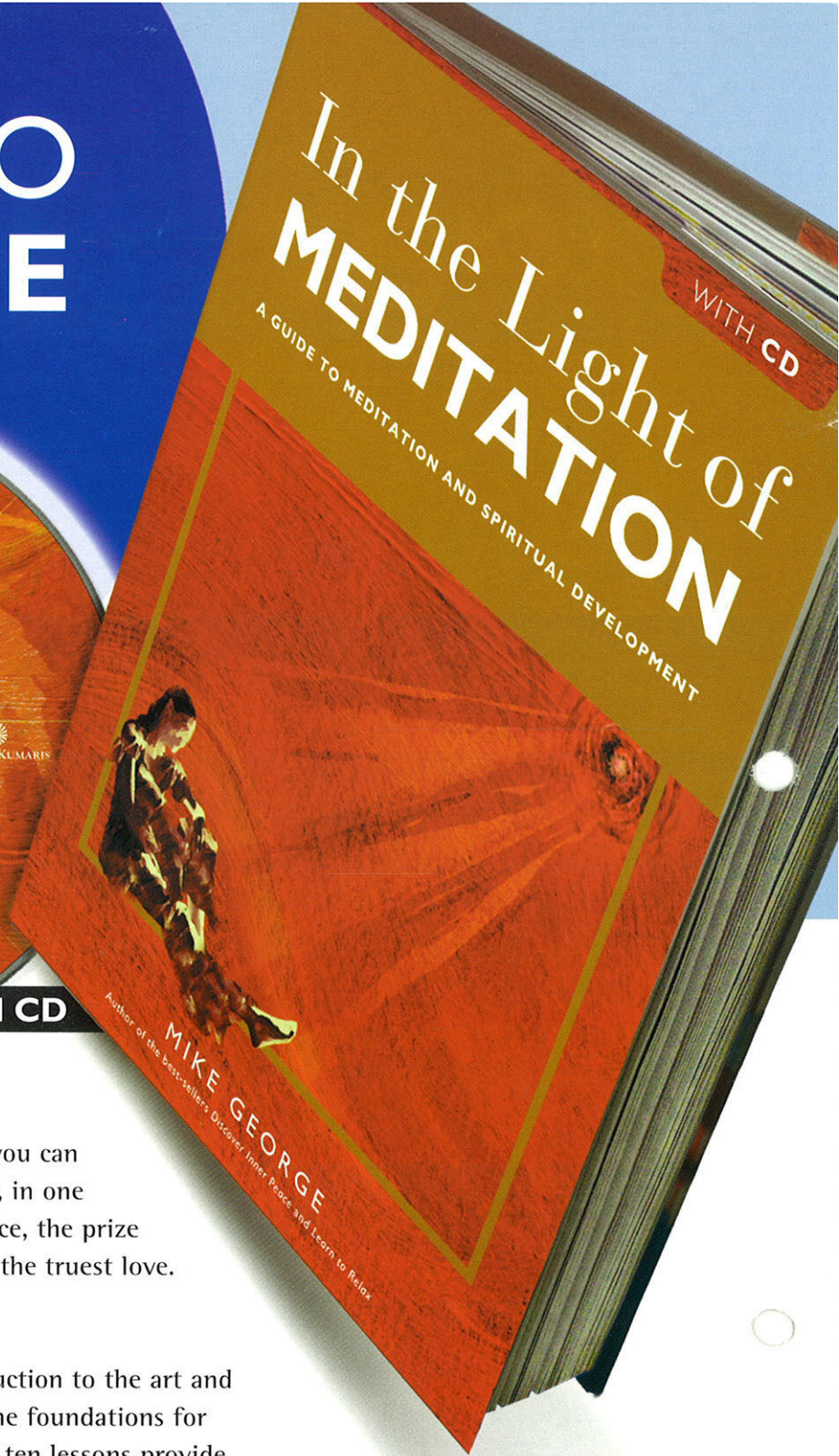
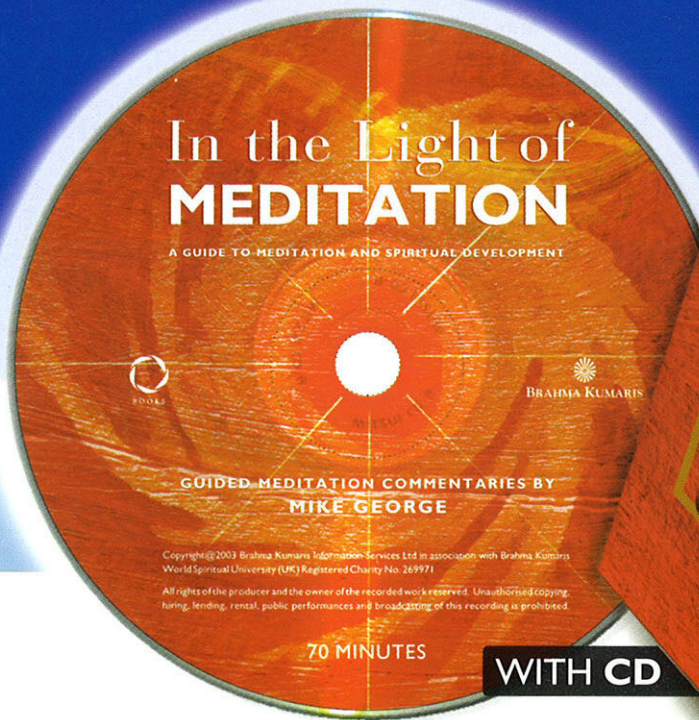
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MENDED MINDS
Tijn Touber talks with Martin Wuttke, a pioneer in neurotherapy

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Meditation is the most important journey you can ever make. It is the journey of no distance, in one second! The destination is the deepest peace, the prize is the greatest happiness and the reward is the truest love. Wisdom grows along the way.

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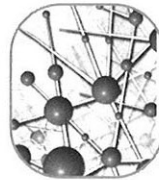
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welcome

Celebrating the Life and Work of Dadi Janki



In 1974, Dadi Janki landed in London and began a spiritual odyssey that would touch and transform the lives of millions of people worldwide. She did not come as a guru, but as someone whose intentions were as pure as they were simple – to help others awaken themselves to their true and eternal spiritual nature and, in doing so, connect them to the Source, to God. Thirty years later, her motive remains exactly the same. Today, she personifies the profile of an authentic spiritual leader, whilst considering herself only a humble instrument for the Supreme.

Thirty years of tireless, focussed, loving, compassionate and dedicated service of others have borne many fruits on many levels. Despite making no charge for any spiritual teaching, the Brahma Kumaris now have centres in over 80 countries. In 1974, there were none outside India. This expansion is due almost entirely to the spiritual power of a woman who was once described as the world's best kept secret!

While most of the BK centres throughout the world are established in the homes of regular students and teachers, there are a growing number of residential and purpose built facilities which are able to offer a service to a wider international community and to larger numbers of people. In many ways, these are the material manifestations of Dadi Janki's inner spiritual work on herself and her selfless service of others. It is a classic example of what 'goes around comes around', where the return of the deep spiritual service of a few is seen at the material level by the many.

There is also a thriving international network of friends and companions who now support Dadi in her work. They have been maturing spiritually over the last two decades, and many now find themselves in positions and roles where they can help the world through the current crop of social,

economic and environmental challenges. It is in these areas, which some have described as undergoing 'crisis of last chance proportions', that there is now a fast growing openness to spiritual solutions.

By her actions, Dadi invites us all to walk with her on the highest path of spiritual purity. By her example, she demonstrates that it is possible to live an authentic spiritual life in a world of spiritual poverty. By her words, she inspires and enlightens all who meet her, as she challenges us to look deeply inside ourselves to realise who we are and what we need to do at this time.

By her vibrations, she fills each soul with courage and connects the soul to God. By the absolute purity of her heart, she draws the hearts of others to stand alongside her at a time when the world is in the chaos of transformation and in need of spiritual leaders.

At the age of 88, Dadi Janki continues to trot the globe with a childlike lightness, combined with the wisdom of the deepest sage. She defies the gravity of a violent world as she brings peace to troubled souls and light to the darkest minds. Rising above the pain of her own ailing body, her pact is with God, His vision is her vision, in sickness and in health, till the task is done and the establishment of a better world is complete.

In 2004, we invite you to celebrate the presence of this remarkable woman.

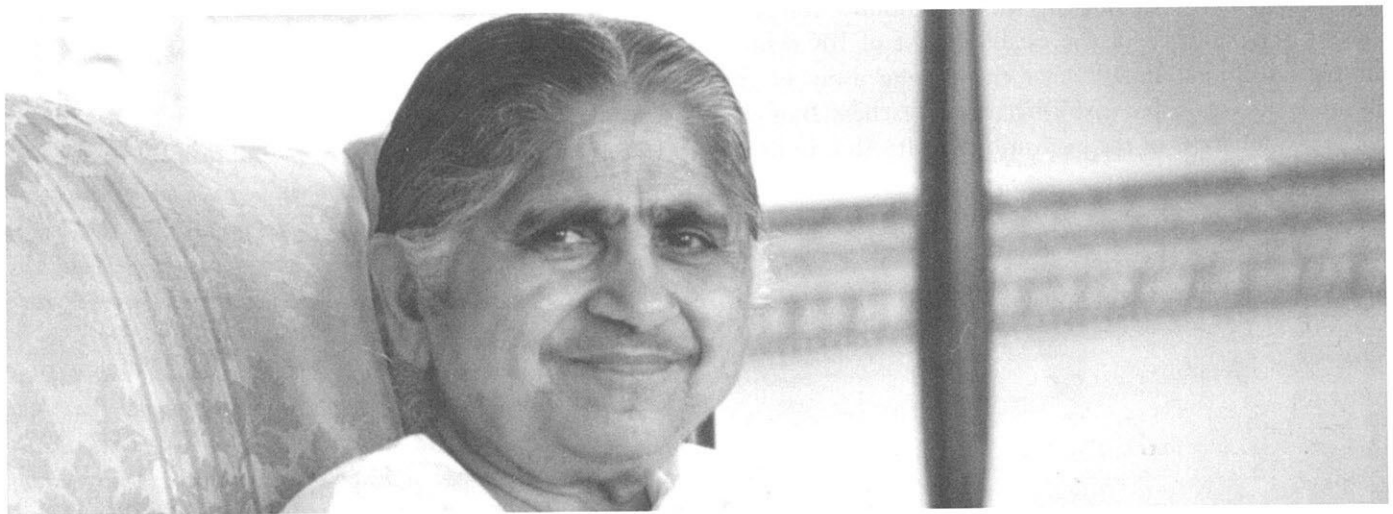
You can find her each day at companionofgod.com

The first part of this issue of Heart & Soul is dedicated to her life and work. ❖

Celebrating **30** Years

A WOMAN OF WISDOM AND PEACE

After 30 years of spiritual service – a brief profile of a tireless server.



Dadi Janki is an 87-year-old spiritual lighthouse and one of two Administrative Heads of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. She presides over a world wide student population of 650,000 people of all ages and backgrounds. Each year she travels the world sustaining the regular students and teachers of the University and bringing a message of peace and a method of enlightenment to hundreds of thousands who attend her public talks.

As a member of the United Nations' prestigious Keepers of Wisdom, Dadi is a leader in the truest sense, seeking not so much to change people, as to model a whole new paradigm. Her personality, shaped by much inner joy and wisdom, has triggered life-altering experiences in those who meet her. Yet despite her impressive credentials, Dadi is disarmingly innocent and humble. This is her story in brief.

Born in 1916 to a philanthropic family of very high moral and religious standing, one of Dadi Janki's earliest memories is of chanting the name of God as she was rocked in her cradle. Her whole childhood reflects a deep love for God, as well as an unswerving desire to serve humanity.

From the start, Dadi's parents were determined to raise her in an atmosphere free of materialism. For the first 10 years of her life, Dadi's education was through a private

tutor and based solely on the study of religious scriptures. Dadi's formal education - the study of basic learning skills - began only afterwards, when she spent a scant 3 years attending public school before going, at her insistence and with her parents' blessings, on an extended tour of India's many holy sites. She was 14 years old.

Travelling with her father, Dadi met with all the foremost gurus, sages and saints of the day. She approached them all with the one same query, "Who is God? Where is He? How can I find Him? How can I experience Him?" This intense search for God was relieved only by her intense devotion to charity. Even as a young child, Dadi was always going out to serve to the poor and needy in surrounding villages.

Dadi was 19 years old when she met Brahma Baba, the founder of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (the BKs). She describes that first encounter as a 'recognition'. At first sight, Dadi simply 'knew' that here was the instrument of the Divine that she had been seeking. She not only heard the truth from this man but she says she saw in his behaviour and felt in his presence the source of truth itself. A few years later, Dadi herself became part of the Brahma Kumaris institution, surrendering her life to God. The first 14 years of that period were spent in an intense training for self-transformation and spiritual

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service. One of Dadi's first duties was to look after the health of the members of the Brahma Kumaris' growing community, a task that finely tuned her understanding of the laws of karma, the effect of the mind on the body and the healing power of love. She became so successful at tending to the health of others that the need to consult with a trained physician arose only 3 times during the whole of those 14 years, within the community of over 300 people.

By the early 1950's, Dadi's own spiritual development had turned her into one of the institution's foremost teachers, responsible for the establishment of BK centres throughout India. In 1969, at the passing away of the founder, she was appointed Director of Teachers Training, at the headquarters of the institution in Mt. Abu, India.



I see Dadi Janki as the embodiment of spiritual power. This translates into the ability to manifest whatever is needed at any time. Thirty years ago, she left India with nothing and now, as I look across the world, I see not just all the buildings and retreat centres but the number of dedicated souls she has inspired to help her. She is a woman who absolutely does not entertain any weak or negative thoughts. One example of this was in the early days, when I was quite affected by someone I worked with and felt them to be an obstacle. Dadi just would not tolerate this kind of negative thinking about another person, regardless of their behaviour. She reminded me of my own power and potential by saying, "Who is he compared to you!" Dadi will do ANYTHING to communicate and break down barriers. I have often watched her melt the hardest heart and create a friend for life, as if changing stone to water.

Maureen Chen

Dadi's life is a study of the power of faith and love for God. Just before she began her spiritual path with the Brahma Kumaris, Dadi was married into a traditional Hindu family. With gender equality in the East, even today, a theory rather than a reality, one can only imagine the conditions for women in the subcontinent during the thirties to fifties. Essentially, women were considered third-class citizens with no rights of their own. Despite the pressure to conform to the traditional role expected of her,



Dadi is a person of extraordinary generosity of spirit. She has the wish that everyone who comes in contact with her leaves more enriched and spiritually uplifted... and they do. Dadi has insight into human nature that I have never seen elsewhere. She has an ability to look deeply into the soul of the other and understand their true motives, desires and qualities. This is why I have always found her advice to be so accurate and true. But probably the most powerful quality of Dadi that has influenced me is her total and passionate love for God. Dadi Janki is, without doubt, a leader of a revolution. A revolution of the spirit that puts forward that pure love, humility, purity, truth and simplicity is strength. For some today, they are seen as weaknesses. Dadi Janki embodies these qualities in her practical life, so she wins the trust of those she is leading. I think this is a powerful message in a world that has lost trust in authority and leadership. This makes Dadi's role in the world a bit special. She is here to spread the feeling of pure love and acceptance, not just for those suffering from material or spiritual poverty but also for the influential and powerful.

Charles Hogg

Dadi found the courage to stand up for what she believed to be her life's purpose – the dedication of her life to God and the task of connecting others to their spiritual parent. This was a revolutionary stand for a woman of her time and place, especially given her background of very little formal education and certainly no qualifications to get a job, let alone manage on her own. During her time as nurse for the BK community in the 1940's, Dadi's own physical health was usually quite poor. She believed that, when given a spiritual task to do, the strength with which to fulfil that task is also given. Her reputation, even today, as a tireless server on all levels – physical, emotional and spiritual – stems from this highest level of consciousness. She has frequently fallen ill over the past two decades, often seriously, but in each instance has demonstrated her ability to transcend physical pain and continue to serve others' spiritual needs.

Celebrating **30** Years

By the end of the 1940's, India and Pakistan had begun their war of partition and again Dadi's faith was the main stay of her well-being. Outside the BK community, there were riots with rivers of blood flowing throughout India, whereas within the community – at that time made up primarily of women – there was an atmosphere of peace and protection. Dadi knew that the only means of safety was through the power of meditation and the strength of an inner connection with God. Outside it was a time of trauma and trouble, whilst inside the compound the women sat in deep meditation, sharing vibrations of light not just for their own well-being, but also for the goodness in all to prevail.

In 1951, after the war, the community moved to Mount Abu, where the Headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris is still situated today. Physically speaking, this move from the tropical climate of sea-level Karachi to the mountains of the Aravali range, Rajasthan, was an extremely difficult one. Now they were over 4,000 feet above sea level, with temperatures reaching below zero in the winter. It was also immediately after the war - a time when food was not easily available. Feeding a community of 300 people became yet one more challenge. Yet even under such difficult conditions, Dadi and the rest of the Brahma Kumaris community experienced an internal, personal state of joy that kept them almost oblivious to the physical hardships



When I look at Dadi Janki, I see someone who has an incredible positivity. She has this high-octane enthusiasm, coupled with great vision, which inspires others. It automatically creates hope and enthusiasm in anyone who comes in front of her, who is remotely interested in spirituality. It explains why so many have decided to help her, in what she sees as God's task, to help all souls out of their suffering. She opens the minds of others. When I first set eyes on her, or her on me, at the airport in Paris in 1982, there was a strong bodiless feeling I got from her gaze, which left me in no doubt as to her spiritual power and this has stimulated me to always listen to her very carefully. A lot of my experiences with her have been frustrating but her continued respect for me is now the basis of our enduring relationship.

Wendy Farrington

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surrounding them. Their days and nights were focused on the experience of that divine power and the spiritual transformation taking place within.

From 1953 onwards, the community began outreaching to other cities in response to invitations from around India. Dadi's first journey took her to Delhi and then on to the Punjab. One of her first lectures was at a gathering of sages in Amritsar. She was the only female speaker amidst a host of sages and saints who were, of course, all male. Dadi's talk was completely different from those of the gurus and they did not lose time in challenging her at every level. Taking them in her stride, she responded from her own personal experience, not just from her own understanding but also from her heart.

Before beginning her work with the BKs, Dadi's one great desire to experience God was the issue she brought to every guru she met. She was always disappointed, as she saw from their eyes that, although they could expound on theory, none of them could offer much by way of an experience.

Apparently, it was quite a unique sight! A woman - in India, in those times - taking on the role of a spiritual guide, on the very same platform as those gurus. And a woman whose teachings were a radical departure from everyone else's! The audience of 10,000 absolutely loved her. While Dadi stayed on in Amritsar, continuing to share the truth as she experienced it, increasing numbers of people began coming to her to learn more. This was too

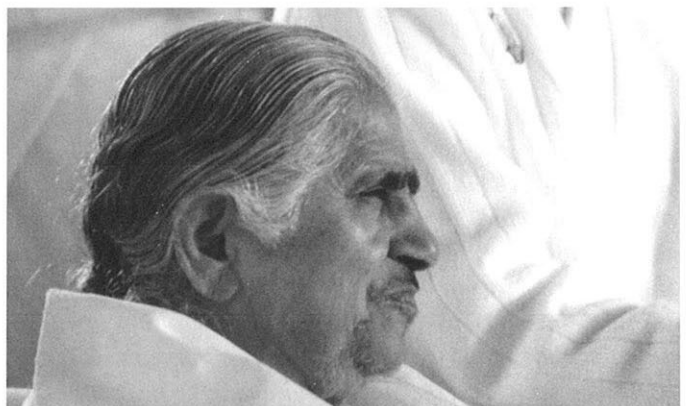
Dadi shows us that it is possible to be fully, passionately engaged in life, while at the same time fully, passionately engaged with God. In fact, she proves that the two go together. Her love for God expresses itself through her deep desire to see humanity freed from sorrow. This takes tremendous courage, a hugely creative intellect and enormous patience and attention. Dadi displays these qualities to the highest degree. As a result, she has also learned to align herself with God's pure purpose to such an extent that she has God's power in her actions. This has made her a master of matter. The purity of her intentions is so complete that people and even Nature are inspired to work with her in service. I see Dadi as someone who is showing the world what God's pure consciousness looks like and feels like. This enables each of us to awaken to our own truth, and feel encouraged, supported and inspired to make the journey back to that original state of purity and power. I have many precious memories, but perhaps the most moving for me was Dadi's response when I went to tell her of my repeated failure to master a particularly damaging habit. I was anguished and acutely embarrassed. She simply showered me with love! Nothing needed to be said. It was pure compassion. This gave me a lasting strength that was beyond my own resources.

Neville Hodgkinson



Dadi Janki has an unending mercy, which gives souls renewed hope and enthusiasm. It is as if she can lift souls out of the quicksand of hopelessness and despair. Her deep love for God is constantly refreshing others, because she herself is refreshed by that daily. It is this power to refresh and empower all souls with self-respect which I find amazing. Dadi's role in the world is very definitely of world mother, because her special power to spiritually sustain others is unsurpassed. It is a sustenance that encourages, awakens and liberates. I see her role revolving around giving God's message of love to people, to help others see God as she has seen and experienced Him as a Father, Mother and Friend. Dadi's wisdom always opened my mind and my heart. When I had finished my first lesson of raja yoga meditation, which had been with another teacher, she saw me and said to me, "Do you know that you are a deity?" I had no idea what a deity was, but I said yes!! That was 26 years ago and I often say yes when she asks me something, not exactly realising why I am saying yes. And it always turns out to be true and for the greatest good.

Anthony Strano



much for the gurus! Ultimately she was handed - very politely - a train ticket. Dadi knew it was time to leave and she did so, with dignity and grace.

This pretty much exemplifies the context within which Dadi and other Brahma Kumaris began to share their ideas across the length and breadth of India at that time. They had absolutely no status, no money and no possessions; however, what they did have were hearts full of love for all souls. Their eyes radiated light and they made everyone feel that at last they had found the spark of enlightenment for which they had been searching.



As a child, I was wearing out my pants on the school benches, while being taught world history and its deep changes through heroes and famous characters, who are still referred to today. For me, Dadi Janki is one of these eminent people, a keystone, inducing changes in our perceptions and behaviour within our societies. Only she is not history - she is NOW!

I sense that Dadi, who is still relatively unknown and incognito, will be revealed as a central piece of a major shift of consciousness to the coming generations. Whereas Mahatma Gandhi was very visible on the stage, with his actions, Dadi works behind the curtains on the awakening and renewal of spirituality in today's world. This is pivotal to the global transformation of our world. Dadi's strength and magic lie in her art to do and do only what God wants her to do. Such an absolute obedience to God and to His directions has transformed her whole life, without giving way to laziness or carelessness. This divine discipline entails 'perfection and power'. The very idea of perfection used to be abstract and unattainable before, but Dadi has helped me understand the real meaning of this concept.

I have always been able to observe, in Dadi, this great ability to touch the heart of people. Her easy ability to tune in to the creation reveals her closeness and her relation to the Creator. She has made her life a poem. When humankind as a whole has become a victim of time, Dadi, owing to her purity and her integrity, has become a 'Master of time'. She is a metronome, who has been able to harmonise herself with the celestial clock and thereby ground her unique rhythm in a frantic world.

To write about Dadi, I feel, is like trying to pin down an holistic dynamic in Cartesian terms, which is like trying to change music into words. Francois Becher

Dadi was in her late fifties when she arrived in London for the first time. It was intended to be a short visit; however, destiny had different ideas! Dadi ended up staying in London, taking up permanent residence and eventually becoming the institution's Overseas Director. As a testimony to Dadi's skills in this capacity, there are now BK centres in over 85 countries around the world.

She came without being able to speak English, carrying just a tiny suitcase with a few clothes. Staying in a small, damp, terraced house in Kilburn in North London, she set the foundations of the Brahma Kumaris' work outside India. Gradually people were drawn to learn meditation and study the spiritual truths taught by the BKs. Slowly but surely the University's work expanded across the UK and into Europe, the Americas and Australasia.

After 10 years of holding daily morning meditations and classes at a local community centre, the first custom built centre was opened in North London. In 1991, a retreat centre was acquired near Oxford, and other retreat centres around the world have also been opened. Today the University has centres in over 80 countries, which means Dadi is almost constantly travelling between countries and centres - sustaining, encouraging, teaching, empowering and inspiring.

Thirty years later, Dadi still has no personal possessions. What she does have are the pearls of wisdom that have been her gifts from God. They are the spiritual treasures of truth that she has been tirelessly sharing throughout almost seven unflinching decades.

From the very simple beginnings in London to the institution's international status in the world today, it has been Dadi's commitment to truth, her vision and her compassion that have inspired tens of thousands to embark on their own spiritual journey and join with others to co-create the University's facilities today.

Whether it is giving time to an individual, meeting leaders from different professional backgrounds, or lecturing to groups often numbering tens of thousands, Dadi shares her wisdom with equal passion and enthusiasm to all. Yet trying to acknowledge Dadi for her amazing life story brings only a smile of complicity onto her face. She always deflects praise, confidently pointing her finger above, saying, "When there is understanding of the divine self and a relationship with the Supreme, then no worrisome, fearsome or sorrowful situation can affect us. When the soul experiences the strength that comes from God's love, there is nothing that can distance the soul from its original state of peace and bliss. Nothing can stop it from walking the path of righteousness and truth and inspiring others to do the same." ❖

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TODAY'S CATALYST FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD



Alfredo Sfeir Younis* looks into the 'mirror of Dadi Janki', reflects on what he sees and on how she may influence the creation of tomorrow's world.

If that is the world we want to wake up to tomorrow morning, what do we have to do today? Why is it that we cannot find that world? We don't have to create this new world. We have to become this new world. We have to change again and again to be able to awaken one day into that world which we are all waiting for. The tragedy of humanity is that this beautiful world is already there and yet somehow we don't grab it, we don't see it.

Despite the Shakespearian tragedy many people seem to live every day, someone and something, somewhere, keeps this world going. It is as though a high-speed train is coming towards us – we feel bad about it, we are unhappy, we are depressed – but somehow our arms are still here and the flowers are still blooming. Someone and something is beyond all of this. I believe this someone and something, that is keeping things going, is both material and non-material (spiritual). This is why I am always searching for people who embody these material and non-material elements - the souls who are essentially the golden thread that keeps the quilt of humanity clean and warm every night, every time, in spite of everything else.

One of the most enlightened people walking with us in this world today is Dadi Janki. I think it is amazing that I have had the privilege to live at the same time as her. It is a pleasure and a privilege to offer this preface to her latest book.

At the material level, she exists as a woman and, at the non-material (spiritual) level, she sits at the point of pure awareness. One the one hand, the pure awareness serves as the golden thread for all humanity and, on the other hand, she does the same things that we do every day like eating, chatting, teaching, sleeping. This incredibly profound and subtle double dimension is like the two sides of a precious coin that we have here at hand.

We are living in a world of major awakening. It is very important to understand that we are not only part of the experience of this awakening, but that we happen to be the architects.

I often ask myself the question, "How would I like to wake up tomorrow morning? What would be my ideal awakening? What would I like my eyes to see?" Sooner or later we will all agree on what this awakening is about. We want a world free of poverty, free of crime, free of racism, a world full of equality and understanding, where people are in happiness, a world without environmental destruction, a world of social stability - a world with a new identity - a world of a new beginning.

“The purity of knowledge is at the essence of this golden thread that Dadi Janki is. The beauty of such knowledge is that it is very simple. Her words find the most intimate space in our hearts and souls.”

Dadi Janki is so important to the world. This importance goes beyond her material existence. She is such a soul that no matter what state she is in physically, she will continue to thread the human quilt so as to awaken us to a better future for humanity. My relationship with Dadi Janki had been very enriching and there are a number of elements in her way of being that I would like to share with you.

1. Dadi Janki is a trustee of the purity of knowledge

The purity of knowledge is at the essence of this golden thread that Dadi Janki is. The beauty of such knowledge is that it is very simple. Her words find the most intimate space in our hearts and souls.

This is an essential lesson that we should learn: that it is not a matter of being only spiritual, but we need to be trustees of the purity of knowledge. It is not just a matter of knowing, it is a matter of what we really self-realise and how that knowledge makes us live our life in a particular way.

One of the most interesting things in my conversations with Dadi Janki is the high degree of consistency. It is not like one mixed salad of things today and another mixed salad of things tomorrow. She is clear and I understand her paradigm exactly. Each meeting gives me an opportunity to see a piece of the puzzle, knowing what the paradigm is all about. It is not like being on automatic pilot, but rather you are sitting with your hands firmly on the steering wheel, knowing there is a road map.

2. Dadi Janki embodies spiritual transformational value

A spiritual teacher or leader is only so if he or she has a transformational value. You would be able to recognise that person as a teacher because they have transformed your life by their mere existence. Others can speak well, they can give knowledge, but that is not everything.

After I first met Dadi Janki, I experienced her transformational value. And, such value must be the icon for all of us. She has not the exclusivity of it. This universal transforming value should also become the engine and ultimate ingredient that moves all institutions in our society, because, in the end, institutions are people. These institutions would not exist if it were not for professionals and people like you and me. Factories don't exist without the human content. Governments don't exist without people.

If you were to ask a political party, “Do you want to create poverty?” they would say, “Of course not.” “Do you want to degrade the environment?” “No, of course not.” If you were to go to a church and ask the same questions, the answers would be the same.

Nobody says they want to create poverty, crime, drug abuse, depression, unhappiness, frustration, etc. But the fact is that we have lost the ability to maintain unified and holistic values when we move from the abstract (the ideal) to the concrete (the reality). There is a breakdown in the ability of our society to maintain unity in the values of existence from the abstract to the concrete. The abstract is what I want to wake up to tomorrow morning and the concrete is the actual reality of what we see every day vis-à-vis those values.

If I asked someone, “Do you love?”, she/he would answer, “Yes, I love.” But actually love is a state of being we need to share as a matter of self-realisation, particularly in times of conflict. Love needs to be where there is none. Spirituality needs to be where there is none. However, few have self-realised these states of being and thus we do not have the ability to share spiritual love with those we dislike, oppose and hate. In the same vein, we talk about equality, inclusion, fraternity, sharing and caring, but we have not experienced these values to share them in the most critical moments.

Dadi Janki has no breakdown between her abstract and her concrete, no matter where she moves. Very few human beings possess such a high ability to maintain this holistic unity in this way, no matter where one is placed. I believe this ability is fundamentally linked to the level of one's consciousness. The lower the level of consciousness, the less the ability we have to uphold consistency between the abstract and the concrete. The higher the level of consciousness, the higher the level of awareness and the higher the ability to work with unity.

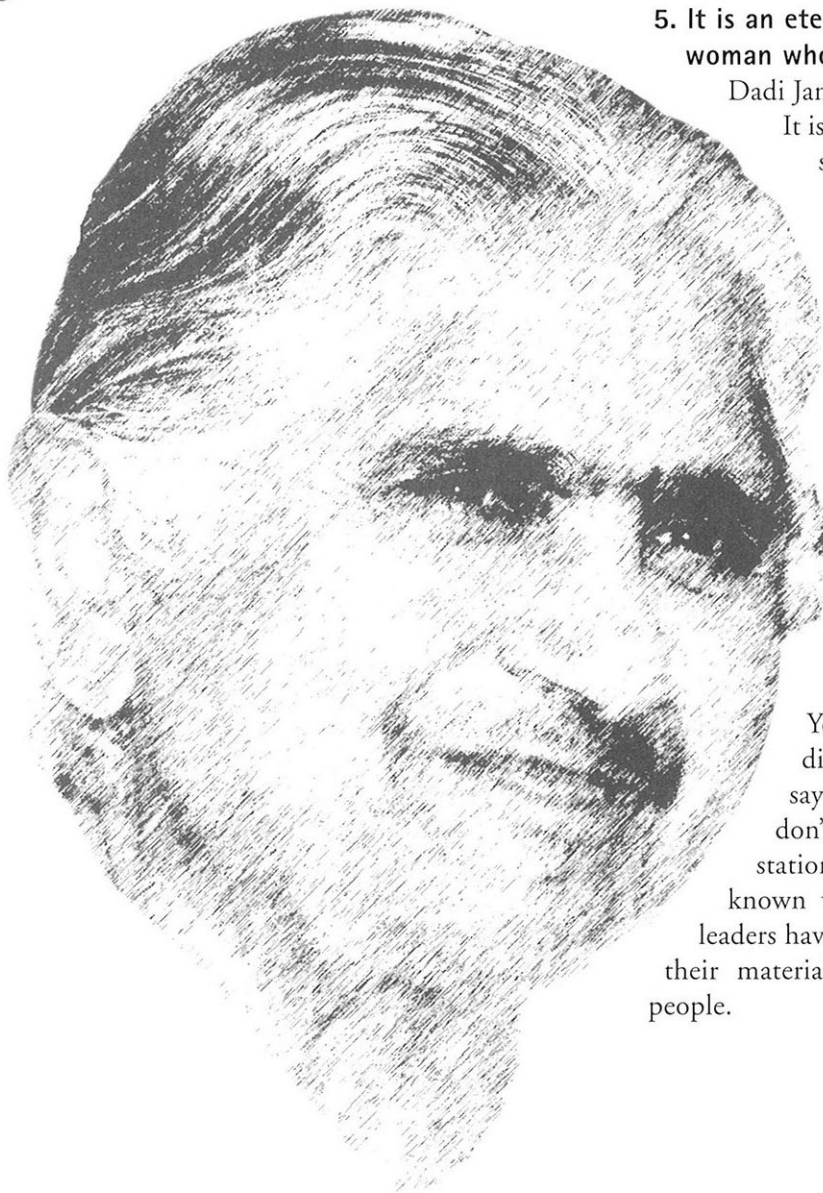
3. I have never seen such a tiny lady with guts like a million elephants put together.

A third very fundamental characteristic of Dadi Janki is that she appreciates every question, every problem, in the purest state of the original of the question or problem. I have never seen her look down on a question, thinking it is too elementary. This has taught me that at the origins of

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existence there is something like a c-drive, the chip of the computer of our existence. In this place, things do not have judgment, things are not good or bad. When questions are put to her that seem to me to be absolutely elementary, all of a sudden Dadi Janki grabs the question and brings it to this chip, and she gives it a spin that puts people into another realm.

When Dadi Janki talks, she touches the universal nature of everyone in the audience. This teaches us that there is a unity in our spiritual lives that is real, from where all of us should be working. I must say, also, that to do what she does and to be who she is in this world, you have to have a lot of 'guts', because you are going against the current. If all of us were like Dadi Janki, we would not be discussing many issues we confront today. I have never see such a tiny lady going around like a nobody, but with guts like a million elephants put together. There are no walls for her. One cannot be a transformational spiritual leader or teacher if you don't have guts. Spirituality is not a matter of living in a shelter.



4. The world of Dadi Janki is a world without frontiers
This is something we all need to learn. We are born without frontiers but very soon afterwards we have all these walls to climb. Dadi Janki lives in a world with no boundaries. I don't think her spiritual life was always this simple. The stories she tells me about her relationship with Brahma Baba (founder of the Brahma Kumaris) are tough ones. They were not just simple lessons she had to learn. There must have been huge work done on her part. So her lesson to me is: if you want to be good at it, you have to work at it. I don't think gifts come to you just the way you want them.

When people go to their offices or to our homes, they see so many boundaries. You are black, she is white; you come from Africa, we come from Latin America; you are a Brahma Kumaris, they are not. This is such a world of boundaries. When Dadi Janki enters a room, you know that she is walking in a world of no boundaries and we should ask ourselves, "When are we going to get there?"

5. It is an eternal puzzle for me to have met a woman who has no crisis of loyalty in life.

Dadi Janki lives in a world without crisis of loyalty.

It is so difficult to live in this world today with so many crises of loyalty - loyalty to my family, loyalty to my institution, loyalty to this, that or the other. Every time one prepares a statement, the tendency is to read it five to six times to see how to minimise a crisis of loyalty.

Our aim must be to live without crisis of loyalty. This aim is a major revolutionary experience and also, to some extent, a frightening experience, because one would have to eliminate a number of things from one's life that we have given to ourselves as needed supports. Where there is no crisis of loyalty, it is so simple to make a decision. You don't have to deal with so many differences of opinion, with who is going to say what and how. It is just so direct. You don't waste too much time, in some railway station of life, waiting for an answer. I have known very few people with this quality. Some leaders have a crisis of loyalty with money, some with their material existence, some with protecting their people.

We live in a world in which it is as if we are mesmerised into a need for some crisis of loyalty. Our value system is very penetrating and it creates so many new loyalties. Just look at television and advertising - cigarettes, whiskies, perfumes, sexuality ... You pay more because you have a crisis of loyalty. In this way, the whole world is being manipulated. To find someone who has no crisis of loyalty at all, where the colour white is white and the colour black is black and there is no grey judgment; this is amazing.

6. There is no compromise in the absolute

Many people are struggling to understand what a living spiritual paradigm means. Dadi Janki represents a practical yardstick to measure whether you are in the spiritual paradigm or not.

She is always living in the absolute. You can see it in the priorities she has, in the topics she discourses on, in the way she guides people. There is nothing where you can say she is putting something down or working in relative terms.

The way to the absolute is very simple. There may be many gates but the main gate that I have experienced is to become self-realised in the basic virtues of humanity. If you don't love, if you don't experience love in its totality, you cannot be in the absolute, because the absolute is love. If you don't experience caring and sharing, you cannot be in the absolute, because the absolute is caring and sharing by definition. If you are only interested in 'my' thing, e.g. 'my' salvation, 'my' enlightenment, you will never be enlightened, because individual enlightenment is always connected to the collective. You could get close to 'the gate', but the Supreme will say, "Where is your sister or brother? Where did you leave them?"

Dadi Janki loves the entire humanity. Of course, she has her own direction, because she has her own body, so she is aware of what she needs to do tomorrow morning - get dressed, eat and talk to people. But she also has the plane of the totality. The privilege of being with Dadi Janki is that this transformational power can actually help you go faster into this process. People like her are walking libraries of the absolute. We were all once in this state of the absolute and somehow we have lost it. How would we really know the difference if we didn't have someone whom we could see in the absolute?

7. Dadi Janki is the mirror you can look into and see your real face

Someone asked me, in relation to Dadi Janki, "Does this stage of the absolute not result in a certain kind of inflexibility?" My answer is that one needs to transpose one's understanding of this reality. The question is, "How clean do I want the mirror to be, to look at myself?" The cleaner the mirror, the clearer is my image. She is the mirror to many souls, a point of reference, and this point of reference is her living in the absolute. You need to understand that somehow souls like her will transform others in relation to the absolute, not in relation to your own theories.

She does not force anyone to her scheme of the absolute. One cannot be her. One can learn from her existence, because all of us are different, and that is the beauty of it. We are not all equal in the spiritual realm as we are at different stages. In this lifetime, you certainly have a choice, and that choice is either to have a clean mirror or not.

Dadi Janki teaches you to be in the first person spiritually.

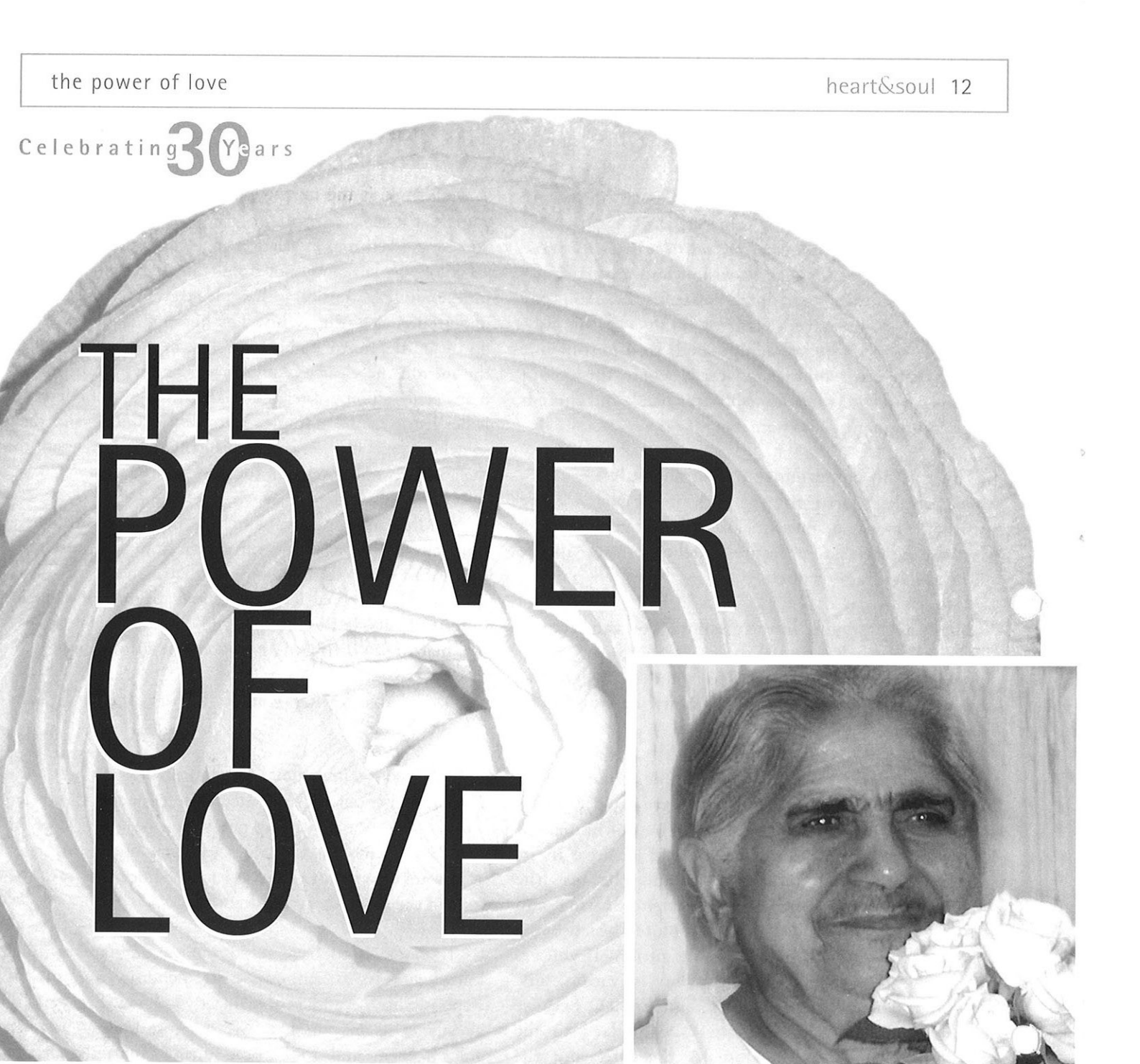
8. Dadi Janki is invincible. She has no fear.

Dadi Janki has self-realised peace. She does not get into war with anyone. She is walking peace. Her beauty is to be in that state of absolute. One does not come out of this state, as it is not a matter of choice any more. Once you reach the state of the absolute, everything changes.

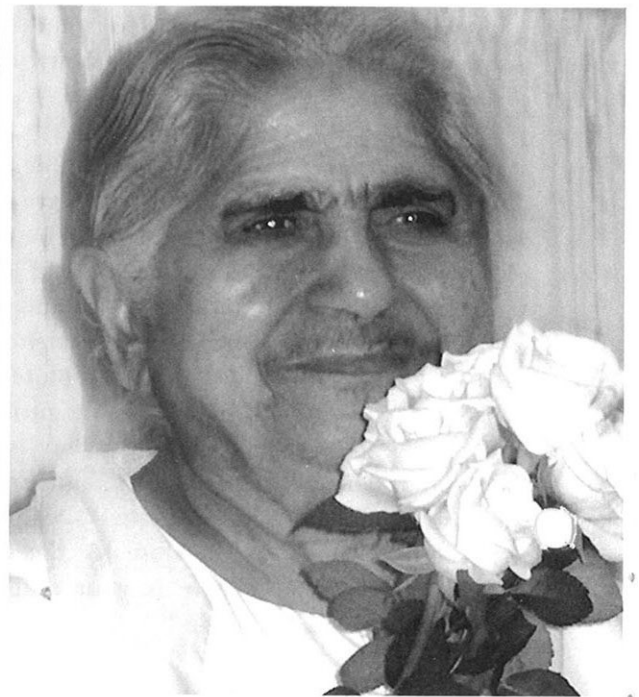
To know is to have responsibility. To have spiritual knowledge is to embody a tremendous amount of responsibility, because in actual fact you know. Every reality already exists in ourselves. We are just finding ways to enliven them and to become them. Not only are we responsible for how we wake up tomorrow morning, but by definition we are agents of change. So the question is not whether you are or you are not. The question is, what type of agent of change do you want to be?

It would be a privilege to attain Dadi Janki's level of the absolute: no crisis of loyalty, great transformational power, great precision and great purity of knowledge.

** Alfredo Sfeir Younis is a Senior Advisor at the World Bank. This is extracted from the introduction to Dadi Janki's most recent book, Inside Out. The views expressed here are solely of the author and should not be attributed to the World Bank or any of its affiliates. Errors and omissions are solely of the author. ❖*

Celebrating **30** Years

THE POWER OF LOVE



In her latest book, *Inside Out*, Dadi Janki explores what we all seek and what we all need.

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS of worry, fear and sorrow are no use to us. They weaken us and cannot help us find lasting solutions to our problems. In a sense, they are the problems. If I have the strength to respond to a situation with calm and ease, it is no longer a problem. But then the question arises, how can we rid ourselves of such thoughts and feelings? Are they not part of the human condition? How can we maintain positive feelings, when so much is wrong with the world – including ourselves?

It is true that, when we are weak, we can't do anything about such feelings. They take us over. However, although weakness may be widespread, it is not our natural condition. Originally, each of us is naturally powerful. In this inner context, power means something akin to the French expression, *joie de vivre*. It means being well stocked with the energy of positive thought and feeling, and knowing how to use and maintain those stocks effectively, replenishing them from an inner well spring. In this powerful state, you feel love for yourself, for others and for life.

When you begin to think positively, you accumulate power. Your self-confidence and effectiveness increase. When you allow negative thoughts to come, it is as if a leak develops in the vessel of the soul.

Even moments of negativity, such as casting a critical eye towards another, automatically cause a loss. You cannot be both positive and negative at the same time. If you slip into prolonged bouts of doubt and criticism, concerning either the self or others, you'll become drained of all the strength you have inside. Such thoughts and feelings take you into a state of turmoil, confusion and, eventually, depression. You'll have no idea of what you are supposed to do or how to do it. You'll feel like a stranger in this world, friendless and purposeless.

However, a point comes when you realise, "What is this way of thinking and feeling doing to me and to my attitude and vision towards others? It's destroying me." This can be a painful realisation, but experience shows that it is the first step towards regaining power. You realise that you have to make yourself rise above not just negative thoughts, but wasteful thoughts and ordinary thoughts too. The reason is that all such thoughts disturb your inner peace and inner peace is needed in order to be able to draw energy and accumulate power from God.

When the surface of a lake is disturbed, it can no longer reflect the surrounding hills or sky. Try to look into it and you won't get past the ripples or waves. The water will seem murky. But when it is still, you can see into its depths and, with a slight shift of focus, you can also see beauty reflected from above. It is the same with the self. Before you can develop love for or even a deep interest in the inner self and God, you need to look at the quality of your thoughts. You have to make them peaceful and pure, even if only temporarily.

The process of realising the true nature of the self and God can also be compared to lighting a lamp. You need a clean wick, protection against the wind and a little oil. Once the flame is lit, the lamp burns by itself, drawing on the reservoir of fuel. The wick is your inner cleanliness. Your thoughts and feelings need to be clean. For this, it is essential to distance yourself from past hurts and resentments, at least long enough to get the lamp going. Worries and desires for the future also have to be left on one side.

Similarly, consciously choose not to think about others for a while. Comparison, jealousy and criticism create emotional storms that also make it difficult to light the lamp. Instead, remember what it means to be still, self-

contained, in the present, beyond conflict and confusion. Then draw on positive thoughts and feelings, such as of peace, happiness, acceptance and kindness. The experience of such qualities is the oil that primes the lamp. It creates a link with God. The reason is that we share these qualities with God.

When you have made these preparations, all that remains is to kindle the light inside with a spark of love. This can come automatically, when you have narrowed the gap between God and yourself. Then the energy flows. This is an amazing, wonderful thing. It is all that is missing in our lives. It is this energy of love that makes it possible to live from inside to out – to become a beacon, in fact – and to prevent the negativities that exist outside from coming in, draining us of happiness and strength.

You feel that God is with you, that He is your companion and that you have all the love and understanding you need. It's as if there is fuel within the flame that makes the light shine brightly. It shows in your eyes, on your face and it comes through in your actions. It lightens up others too. The feeling is a completely natural one. I don't see it as either supernatural or mystical. It has to do with what some scientists call the energy of pure consciousness. But there is magic in the way it transforms.

Source of living energy

There is great happiness in understanding that this source of living energy is available to us. It is distinct from us – that is why the current flows – but our own human nature is such as to be able to receive and distribute this energy from God. We can see it working at three different levels or degrees of intensity, within the self, corresponding to three stages of the journey back to our truth.

The first level comes with remembering God, which means taking steps of love towards God. It's a return journey. God is not really such a big mystery. We have known Him, but forgotten Him. The second level is associated with relationship with God, which develops as I practise the experience of a concentrated, non-physical awareness and state of mind known as soul-consciousness. I can begin to see the energy of God's love working in my life. The third level comes when there is deep connection with God. It brings completion within the soul, and power. As human beings, we have the unique faculty of an intellect, which allows us to make deliberate choices about how to direct our thoughts and feelings, sending them in a particular direction.

Celebrating **30** Years



Many do feel they would like to remember God. However, they are frustrated in that aim because their mind and intellect are caught up elsewhere. The intellect has developed the habit of remembering all sorts of physical attractions and concerns. It has allowed the mind to enter into such deep relationship and connection with aspects of the physical world as to become trapped by them. This is the root cause of our problems. The physical world itself is not the problem. It is like a beautiful stage, on which the drama of life is enacted.

It is when we become over-absorbed and lose ourselves in the scenes and roles of this drama, forgetting that we are actors on the stage, that we become distanced from our inner truth.

We have to gently teach the mind and intellect to stop wandering around outside and looking to material aspects of existence for a sense of purpose and direction. We have

It is when we become over-absorbed and lose ourselves in the scenes and roles of this drama, forgetting that we are actors on the stage, that we become distanced from our inner truth.

developed the habit of taking comfort and support from these aspects, forgetting they can only ever be temporary since the whole of the material world is in a constant state of flux.

Sometimes it is 'my' possessions, or 'my' body, that have taken a grip on me in this way. When that is the case, a loss of wealth or health will distress me far more than when my sense of who I am is rooted at a deeper level. Or perhaps I have a feeling of ownership towards another human being or human beings. It could be 'my' partner, 'my' relatives, 'my' friend or even 'my' enemy. Or I may have become absorbed in 'my' position in the world. Thinking too strongly in this 'my' and 'mine' way, it is as if I am trying to bind myself and this world outside of me together, in order to control it. In all such cases, I am setting myself up to suffer because, when I do this, I am actually handing over my freedom.

I lose sight of the real self, which is the inner being, and of God, the One whom I really can call mine eternally. I lose my energy, my power and ultimately my self-respect. As long as my consciousness is trapped by the body and its physical relationships and connections, I can't experience the freedom and happiness that are rightfully mine. Consequently, I can't fulfil my responsibilities in my relationships with others either.

The secret of living from inside to outside is to get to know ourselves again internally, and recover an ability to draw on the energy of our inner truth. Then, we can be free! Why are young children often so loveable? We love the uncritical, innocent pleasure we see in them, when they are free of material worries, and the fear and sorrow that go with those worries. While that innocence lasts, they don't have concerns about their body or their role in life. They just get on with living. The light in the eyes of a child steeped in the love of life and the joy of the moment reminds us of our own original condition of freedom.

Remembering that originally I too am a free spirit is the key for becoming free. Then I can draw on an unlimited source of love, wisdom and happiness, when I stop looking for these qualities in the world outside and instead attend to my inner world. I have to realise the importance of this deliberate act of remembering, and learn to use my intellect to practise and develop a taste for turning my thoughts away from the outside world and going within.

Extracted from Dadi Janki's latest book Inside Out. Dadi Janki is the joint Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. ❖



SIMPLICITY

In her recent book, *The Illuminated Soul*, Judy Pemell reminds us of the significance and the depth of living in simpler ways

Simplicity is the art of being. As we become more free of the ego-personality, complex life situations that may have once pulled us no longer hold any attraction. The desire for possessions and acquisition is reversed. Over time, our lifestyle becomes simple and we feel a pull to simplicity in all we do. Simplicity is a hallmark of the person who is moving along the spiritual path, of the soul who is becoming free.

Siddhartha, son of Brahmin, knows how to soundlessly speak the OM, breathe it into himself with all his soul. The exquisitely drawn character of Siddhartha in Herman Hesse's classic tale possesses great depth of spirit, grace, clarity of intellect and is loved by all. Yet, for all his attributes of physical beauty, good breeding, comfort and sadhana (spiritual effort), Siddhartha is not happy. He does not know joy. Renouncing his family and home, he

wanders as a samana (a renunciate who seeks to be completely free from ego) for many years, developing in himself a profound simplicity. Upon meeting the revered Gautama Buddha in the forest and listening to the profound teachings he has to share, Siddhartha realises that following even the greatest of human teachers cannot deliver him from ego. He must become his own teacher; he must find his own way and deliver himself.

Embracing everything he has hitherto renounced, he explores his opposite polarities with 'the child people', his term for society. The beautiful courtesan, Kamala, whom he meets entering a village, asks Siddhartha what a simple samana such as he can do. "I can think, I can fast and I can wait," he replies. His liaison with Kamala leads him to explore relationship with a woman and the finer arts of tantric lovemaking. In keeping with Kamala's values, he

immerses himself totally in the world of business, wealth, material comfort, success and sensual pleasures. Eventually, having pursued sensual gratification with Kamala, he is confronted by the resulting hollowness of his existence. He realises they cannot experience true love for one another this way and he knows he has forgotten how to think, to fast and to wait.

Siddhartha has lost his simplicity and knows he must return to the life of a renunciate to reconnect with his spirituality. While he is living by the river with the humble ferryman, who is the embodiment of simplicity, wisdom and a soul nearing perfection, Siddhartha's life lessons bring him full-cycle to humility. He must come to know and experience the deep suffering of attachment, and the excesses of the physical, sensual and material, to truly understand and value the freedom and sweetness of simplicity and, ultimately, egolessness.

Simplicity is the art of just being. Even the finest, most subtle threads of attachment become a veil, which obscure the deep bliss and joy within. However, it is not necessary to live as a samana in the forest and to renounce all the trappings of a twenty-first century existence in order to experience simplicity. Renunciation does not mean



living in austerity, but, rather, renouncing ego-identification with possessions. For instance, we need a car, a home, clothes and numerous other 'things' to maintain our existence at the physical level. If the clothing absolutely has to bear a Giorgio Armani label, then the ego identity is involved. In other words, there is attachment. When we lose connection with our spiritual value, we place this value on outer things, then become dependent on those things to feel good about ourselves.



Every decade of a person's life adds many layers to the personality and complexities he or she adopts, that continue to obscure and sever us from our essence. The process is subtle and continuously erosive. Renunciation involves an attitude of detachment from material possessions. Mohandas Gandhi set an example of renunciation and poverty by possessing only one set of clothes – a short dhoti, a pair of sandals, plus a shirt and a shawl for the cold weather.

The Buddha and Christ also made themselves examples of renunciation and simplicity, as have many others who have experienced a spiritual awakening and turned to the spiritual path. Leading the life of an ascetic for its own sake does not occasion spiritual growth any more than does living in a palace with priceless, sacred possessions. Maintaining a detached attitude from possessions is what is important. A spiritual life involves the extraordinarily difficult art of balance. The spiritual path teaches us to avoid extremes of behaviour, to live simply, to be mindful of balance – to be moderate in all we do and not allow ourselves to become too tired, to work too hard, to become over-involved or under-involved in what we do. By learning equanimity in all things – for example, in success and failure, praise and defamation, good fortune and adversity – a centred soul may live a life of balance and equanimity, rather than extremes. This too is simplicity.

Inner peace and contentment arise from balance. A soul who is being pulled between the pairs of opposites in the personality experiences no peace and no happiness. The complete soul exists in a state of perfect balance and expresses this inner balance in all things. Inner calm leads to outer calm. The soul's inner environment will influence the outer environment and atmosphere. The more aligned with our spirituality we become, the more this will be reflected in a clean, open and harmonious environment. It will be a statement of simplicity. Creation of work and home environments will reveal a clear, welcoming, organised and pleasant space, filled with good vibrations, instead of clutter and junk.

Material clutter is a sign of mental clutter. The home or work environment is a mirror of our inner environment. Inner work clears out mental and emotional clutter, creating a feeling of inner space. Inner spaciousness produces feelings of freedom and lightness and, as we clean out our inner space, our personal physical environment will become a reflection of this. The soul is the source of simplicity. Spaciousness within creates a reflection in many expressions. Simplicity of being is evident not only in the way we live but becomes very apparent in lifestyle, physical appearance, thoughts, communication style, interactions, relationships and our way of being in the world.

An individual who possesses simplicity will do one thing at a time and be completely focused on that one thing. After many years of observing very experienced yogis in everyday situations, it is apparent that when they eat, they focus entirely on eating. They do not read the paper or have a meeting while they are eating. When they have a cup of tea, they stop what they are doing and just focus on drinking the tea. When they read, they create the space to just read. When they have a meeting, they give their entire attention to the meeting until it finishes. The moment the meeting is over, their thoughts have also left the meeting. When going for a walk, it is a walk and a time to commune with nature. They are completely focused in the present, one thing at a time. When they sleep, they sleep well and need little sleep.

The mind of a yogi is still, silent and stable. There is no excess thought. They do not allow their mind to worry about anything, nor their thoughts to become anxious or distracted. While they can and do achieve a great deal in the course of a day's activities, they would never say they are busy. Because their mind is uncluttered, they think a minimum of thoughts and only those that are necessary. They are always available because, with nothing on their mind, they can give themselves completely to the moment and task at hand. At the inner and outer level, they accomplish a great deal with ease. This is simplicity. The mind is an obedient servant. It does not dwell on the past nor on the future and there is no inner conflict. All tasks are given total attention until they are finished. The practised yogi completes everything and moves into the next activity freely. In this way, unfinished business does not accumulate or prevent full attention on the present.

When being busy is a perpetual state of being, there is disconnection from the self and over-connection with the environment. The person who 'must' keep busy and habitually overcommits themselves, either with work, social life or other things, will spend a lot of time and valuable energy avoiding themselves. They frequently speak of 'how



busy' they are – the mantra of the twenty-first century – and unnecessarily complicate their life. The ability to concentrate and focus without extraneous thought reveals simplicity of thinking. The intellect, disciplined by meditation, exercises absolute control over the mind, ensuring that this is the case. Simplicity is freedom.

The mind that races – thoughts and words tumbling out, interrupting others habitually in conversation, unable to listen or wait until others can complete what they are saying, wanting fast answers and instant information – is a mind out of control. "But I don't have time to meditate!" is the catch phrase of the ego-personality. The goals and conditioning of the material world lead us away from self-discovery, they lead us away from ourselves. Reliance on 'things' outside the self leads to reinforcement of the false self and the emptiness this brings.

Worrying about things which have or have not happened is self-destructive. Reducing life's problems into small, manageable proportions enables us to deal with things one at a time, without giving up our power and confidence. Negative and critical thoughts undermine the soul, whereas positive, constructive thinking empower the soul. Simplifying things at the level of thought means simplifying life.

When the mind is centred, still and silent, I act and respond from the solid core of myself. There is no scattering of energy, words, thought or action. Economy is a sign of simplicity. When I am economical with my thoughts, my words are an expression of soul and are filled with meaning and truth. When I am anchored in my true self, relationships and interactions become easy and simple. The clarity and distinction between I and Thou is not transgressed, for my boundaries are clear.

While working in Vietnam I was taken to visit a colleague's property in the countryside just outside Ho Chi Minh City. The property consisted of an orchard and an old, rather quaint, ramshackle house. The owners lived in

the city and had asked a Buddhist nun to stay in the house and look after it for them. There was no telephone at the house. Inside, a worn black and white marble floor greeted us as we entered and there were just a few pieces of rustic furniture. Otherwise it was bare, dark and reminiscent of a Buddhist temple, with a very large altar upon which incense was burning. Thin shafts of sunlight filtered through the shuttered windows.

The nun spoke no English and was dressed in characteristic brown cloth that was very worn. When we entered, she asked us to light some incense, which we placed on the altar. After a brief tour, we went outside into the bright, sunlit orchard, where I noticed a small vegetable garden and the nun's clothes hanging out to dry. They were little more than threadbare rags, clearly she was very poor. Moving into the overgrown gardens, we found a shaded area with table and seats, to sit and talk. The nun produced boiled water, which she placed before us hospitably in thermos flasks, which had seen much better days.

When it came time to leave, the nun returned to say goodbye to us. I observed her gentle demeanour, her hand and fingernails looking as though they had not seen soap and water for some time. I asked how she spent her time here, all alone, and what her spiritual practice meant to her. My friend acted as translator. "She says she spends all of her time meditating and praying for the spiritual upliftment of our country. This is all, this is her whole life." Her round face was soft and her liquid brown eyes were large pools of light. A radiant, compassionate being was shining through those eyes. Gazing into them I felt the warmth of her love and silence. I wanted to give her something, to let her know that I felt a connection with her. Words were not necessary; I could see and feel the unmistakable sign of recognition. Deep inside, I was touched by her simplicity.

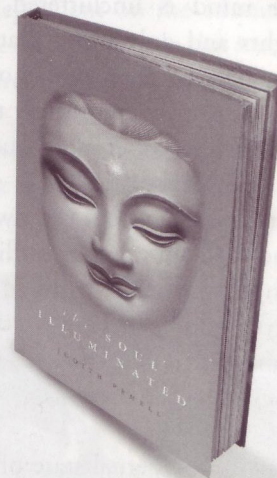
Such moments pass in the flicker of an eye, yet this kind of contact is precious and special to me, and never forgotten. Most of what I observed in Vietnam moved me. I saw a people struggling to put the past behind them to move forward in peace and co-operation. I watched the way they flowed and moved along their crowded roads. Very rarely did anyone stop. Their system is to keep flowing and to go around whatever might be in the way. Crossing the road on foot is an interesting exercise in faith, as the traffic never stops. It is all done through eye contact with the riders and drivers, who simply ride around pedestrians as they cross. It took a little while to get the hang of it.

Given the volume of traffic and the huge numbers of people, this was remarkable. Not once did I witness a trace of irritation, anger or violence. The ancient traditions and practices of Asia are grounded in Buddhism and Taoism, which appear to enable the people to accept and accommodate the trauma of war and political upheaval, with minimum disruption to their lives – like the 'zen' of managing crisis and change.

The natural wisdom of the soul is rooted in humility and inner vision. The ferryman, who was Siddhartha's mentor, rarely spoke, but he listened and observed from the depth of his soul. It is not clever words or the sound of one's voice that bring enlightenment to others, it is the soul's deep silence and wisdom of experience, which is imparted in every action and expression. Knowledge for the sake of being clever does not enable the soul to make spiritual progress; instead it feeds the ego identity and supports the inflation of the false self.

When a teacher is very articulate and clever with words, even spiritual information may be used to glorify the self rather than benefit others. When truth becomes contaminated by ego or falsehood, happiness disappears. In their simplicity of being, children use their spirituality creatively and spontaneously to play and to grow.

As adults, we express these qualities fully as we develop spiritually. Herman Hesse's Siddhartha took leave of his Brahmin household to experience, learn and taste the complexity of existence in order to attain and value simplicity. Our journey to spiritual completion means embracing and integrating our complex and serious 'adult nature', as we return to our natural simplicity, playfulness and child-like joy and innocence – through the wisdom and experience of maturity.



*Judith Pemell is a Sydney-based counsellor and educator in inner development, with a professional background in the treatment of addictions. This is extracted from her recent book, **The Illuminated Soul**. ❖*

Unrelaxed Kids!



Marneta Viegas talks about how she felt and heard the call to help children relax and the book which could be essential reading for every parent!

1 often get the impression that most people do not enjoy their job. You can tell by looking at their faces on the way to work in the morning. So I know I've been so lucky. Being a professional children's entertainer for ten years was a wonderful way to work and live. Perhaps one of life's deepest satisfactions is to entertain and bring lightness into the lives of others. Working with children also brought the child out in me and on so many occasions I was aware that I was entertaining myself. Unfortunately, during the last ten years, I've watched both the world and children change dramatically.

A few years ago, one particular event brought home to me that it was time for me to change, time for me to step out of my entertainer's comfort zone and begin to offer children a little more than fun and games. I was asked to entertain a group of children for two hours at an after school birthday party. I arrived to find fifteen shouting, yelling, screaming seven-year-old boys. It was complete pandemonium, with absolutely no sign that they were going to sit down and pay attention to me. It was the children's entertainer's nightmare scenario – parents gone, a room full of hyperactive kids and two hours to fill. The only way I could get their interest was to promise to show them something

Recently, one mother told me how she had created the habit of rushing everything. Her mantra in life had become, "There's not enough time." Everything she did was accompanied by this voice in her head, which would regularly emerge in her words as, "There's not enough time."

they had never seen or done before. Slowly but surely, I managed to get their attention long enough to get them to lie on the floor. Then I led them into a visualisation exercise. After twenty minutes, every single one had calmed down. Two of them even fell asleep. The contrast with those first moments could not have been greater. The whole exercise was one big message about what I needed to do next with my life.

For some time, I had been noticing that it was becoming harder to connect with more and more children. Whether it's down to diet, lifestyle, lack of parental attention or too much TV and computer games, I became increasingly aware of children in need of specific help, and it wasn't entertainment.

The main signs of a child not maturing as they should include not being able to concentrate at all, unable to sit still for a moment, nervousness disguised as hyperactivity, extreme insecurity, unable to be alone and constantly seeking some form of attention. But by far the most concerning behaviour is the almost constant reactivity. Increasingly rare is the child who acts after consciously thinking and deciding what they are going to do.

All these behaviours are simply a cry for help. So in response to this call from kids, I set up Relax Kids. It's my way of helping kids learn what no one ever teaches them, which is how to be peaceful wherever and whenever they want, how to concentrate their mind, how to use their imagination in a focused and positive ways and how to push the pause button and consider options before action.

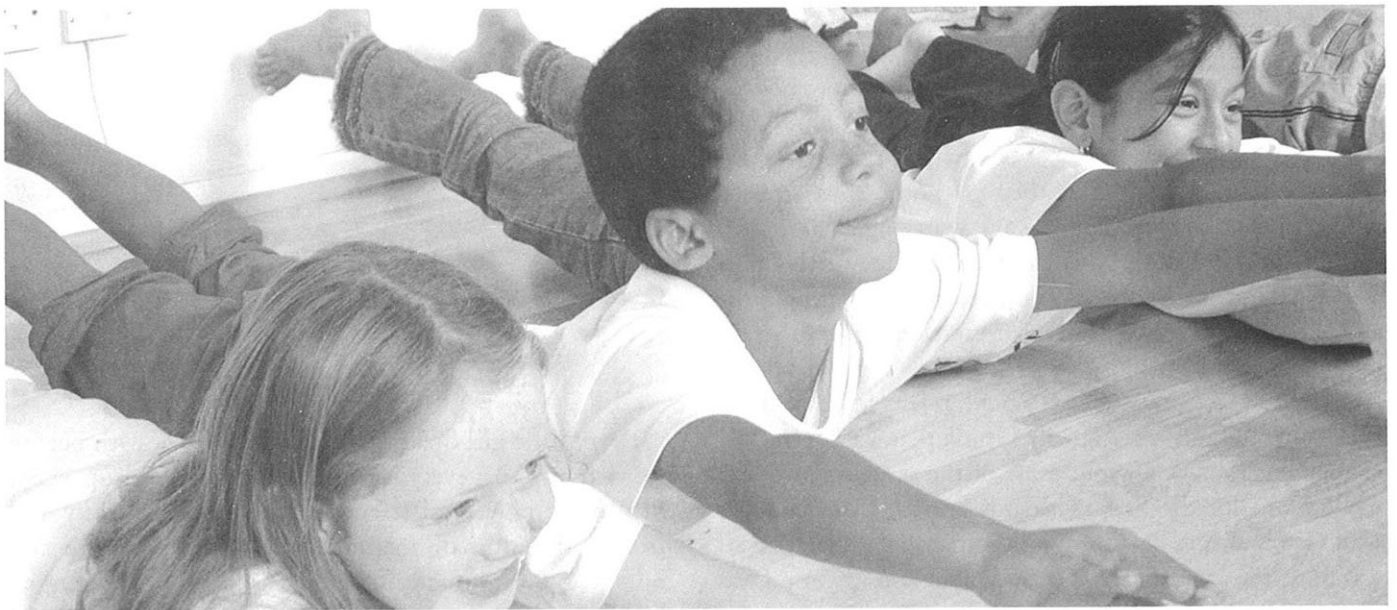
Recently, one mother told me how she had created the habit of rushing everything. Her mantra in life had become, "There's not enough time." Everything she did was accompanied by this voice in her head, which would regularly emerge in her words as, "There's not enough time."

Then one day her five-year-old daughter, who was about to begin a simple non-urgent task, said, "Mummy, I think we don't have enough time." It stopped her in her tracks as she realised what she was passing on. Another dimension to this illusion of 'time famine' is parents' using TV and computers to keep children occupied while they lose themselves in a flurry of their own activities. This trend is now coming home to roost, as many schools are now finding that children don't know how to talk to each other. Before any meaningful learning can begin, they have to teach children basic communication skills. E-mailing, texting and televisions are all threatening to create a new generation of adults who don't know how to talk to another person. We already see the result of this in some communities. The inability to control oneself and to articulate one's thoughts and feelings means those thoughts and emotions come straight out at the level of behaviour. The price we pay is an increasingly violent society.

However, by far the most concerning trend is the number of children on anti-depressants or energy suppressants. Recent research has indicated that over 50,000 children in the UK are on anti-depressants. These are simply quick and violent ways to manage a child's energy. It all comes down to adults not being prepared to teach children how to manage themselves, which means how to manage their minds. But that's hard, because parents themselves have never been taught how to manage their own imagination, thoughts and feelings. They don't know how to use their own mind or control their emotions. Which means parents need to learn for themselves how to stay calm, maintain a positive attitude and be creative before they can teach their children. This is a massive challenge, especially when parents don't want to see themselves as teachers and tend to be dependent on the education system to do this work. But the system can't do this work because it's too busy helping children cram facts into their young memories.

So that's where Relax Kids comes in. It's for children and parents. Yes it is primarily to help children, but I know that to do that I also need to help parents. It's essential for a





Try these stories tonight with your children

ALADDIN'S MAGIC CARPET

Close your eyes, be very still, and imagine that you have Aladdin's magic carpet. Take a closer look. It is the most spectacular carpet in the world, made with very special golden thread. The carpet is colourful and has an exquisite design on it. Spend a few moments looking at the beautiful patterns and vibrant colours.

Sit in the middle of the magic carpet and cross your legs. Now say the magic word ... Abracadabra ... and feel the carpet start to float very gently above the ground. Feel yourself getting lighter and lighter as you fly higher into the air. Up and up you go until you are far into the clouds. And now the carpet picks up a little speed and you start to move forward. You can swoop and soar, zip and zoom, dip and dive, flit and flutter on this magic carpet. The tassels of the carpet are blowing in the wind. Feel the air rushing through your hair and the clouds brushing your face. You feel fresh and invigorated as the magic carpet takes you around the world.

Whenever you like, you may ask the carpet to slow down or float, as you stop to look at the beautiful landscapes below. You may wish to hover over the desert or the snow-capped mountains or the greeny-blue sea. The choice is yours. Be free to go on your own special adventure and explore new and exciting lands and possibilities.

And now, when you are ready, wiggle your fingers and toes, have a big stretch and open your eyes.

I AM FREE, I AM FREE

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Close your eyes, be very still and imagine that you are Alice in Wonderland. Look around you and you will see a strange land, talking rabbits, smiling cats, mad hatters ...

You find a little bottle of colourful liquid with a label saying, "Drink me!" You sniff the bottle and it smells like strawberry and chocolate and cherries. It smells so sweet and delicious. Drink the liquid. It tastes wonderful. You have never tasted anything so yummy in your life.

Very slowly you feel a lovely tingling in your feet. This feeling rises up through your whole body. It feels very warm and cozy. Then you notice you are very slowly getting taller and taller. You are growing, your head is going up and up and up into the sky. Your arms are growing longer. Your feet are growing too ... until finally you are so tall you can reach the sky. How does it feel to be so tall? Your head is peeping into the sky. It feels very peaceful and relaxing, standing there with your head in the clouds. You feel the fluffy clouds brush past your cheeks. You can also feel the dewy mist on your eyelashes. You feel so relaxed and peaceful in the silent clouds – far, far away from the noise of the world. Stay there for a while, feeling peaceful.

And now, when you feel ready to return to your normal size, take another sip of the delicious drink and slowly, slowly, shrink back to your normal size.

And now, when you are ready, wiggle your fingers and toes, have a big stretch and open your eyes.

I AM RELAXED, I AM RELAXED

tranquil

child to know how to relax their mind and body, but it doesn't help when they go home to a stressed parent always rushing and always worrying. That's why Relax Kids is for both parent and child. One of the most frequent kinds of feedback that I receive when people use any of the visualisations, stories or exercises I give them for their children, is when they say, "You know I enjoyed doing that exercise for my kid so much. I felt so relaxed, so peaceful within myself. Actually I think that was for me just as much as them." I wrote most of the visualisations and meditations for the first RelaxKids book in March 2002, while I was sitting on top of a mountain in India. The air was pure, the atmosphere cool and silent and my mind was fresh and clear. With each word came a profound experience of peace and lightness. And, as I wrote the meditations, I seemed to travel into the fairyland I would like children and their parents to feel when reading the book.

Like every child, I was always deeply fascinated by fairy stories and, as an adult, they have played a major part in my work, both as a children's entertainer and a children's theatre director. I think the reason we are so attracted to fairy stories is that they touch something deep inside us. Within each story lies our deepest desire for ultimate love, happiness and truth. These are like the foundation stones of a contented and creative mind. They are the building blocks of a positive attitude and proactive behaviour.

Children love fairy stories because they take the imagination to greater depths, as they describe an enchanted world full of new possibilities. The

characters often show either great feats of strength or incredible acts of love and courage, and there is usually a struggle of good over evil. All these ingredients are essential for helping young minds relax and discern right from wrong, which is essential to healthy growth and inner development. Fairy stories touch the very core of the human heart, because they speak to our deep and innate positive qualities that we strive to bring into our life. It tells the child that it's OK to allow these positive qualities to come through into their character.

So what I have done is transform well-loved fairy stories into simple visualisations. This gives children (and adults) an opportunity to taste the magic as they explore the well of positive and pure feeling inside them.



Every little girl dreams of being a princess with beauty and virtue, whilst every little boy desires to be a superhero with magic powers of strength and courage. Beauty and virtue – the ultimate feminine ideal – and strength and courage – the ultimate masculine ideal. By encouraging children to practise a combination of feminine and masculine meditations, they have the opportunity to experience balance and develop a full spectrum of human qualities. So, these story-visualisations have been designed to encourage your child's imagination and creativity. In the process, I hope that they will lead them into the same positive and peaceful emotional state that I felt when I was seated on my mountain top in India.

Sometimes the last thing we feel like doing is reading a story to our child at bedtime – which is why the book is also designed to give parents space to relax alongside their child. There are affirmations at the bottom of each page to help parents to create a suitable mind set and atmosphere, so aiding their child's relaxation as well as their own. The book is also suitable for nursery and primary school teachers to read to children as an aid to relaxation during quiet or circle time.

I see a challenging time ahead for us all. It's obvious the world is not going to slow down, or that the external stimulants which prey on our senses and sensibilities will become any less. I also see the huge challenge facing every parent who must find ways to help their child put down the right inner foundations for the growth and development of a strong mind and discerning intellect. But most of all, I feel for today's and tomorrow's children. No other generation has come into the world and had to face such an onslaught of fast paced change, ruthless marketing and multitasking super-busy parents. Relax Kids is first and foremost for them.

Marneta Viegas is a children's entertainer, theatre director and the Founder of Relax Kids.

See www.relaxkids.com.

Marneta can be contacted at nettles@fairadsl.co.uk ❖



CREATIVITY AND SPIRIT

Neville Hodgkinson explores the role of consciousness in science and the science of consciousness

Creativity has many different forms. One that I find particularly valuable relates to creating the shape of one's life. Thanks to a change of direction in the way I was living my life twenty years ago, I see the enormous possibilities of our being creative as individuals. Before adopting a more reflective approach to life, I was very reactive, just doing the things that family and friends, bosses and work colleagues seemed to expect of me. It was only when I had reached my mid-thirties and had started to feel a deep internal emptiness, that I began to investigate different ways of living.

I used to work as a science correspondent and was amused to learn the results of the project to map the human genome. It's thought now that there are some 30,000 active genes in a human being, a vast number, but far less than had been anticipated. And a lot of those 30,000 we share with other species, including five with a banana! Previously, it was thought that there would be something like 100,000 genes determining all the complexity that makes a human. But genes are looking more and more like instruments that we use to express ourselves, rather than determinants of what we are.

For a long time after the structure of DNA was discovered, it was felt that this provided a fixed template that determined not just our physical characteristics, but also our lives. It was held to be the secret of life. For several decades, there was great resistance to work by the late Barbara McClintock, showing that genes can multiply and jump from one chromosome to another within the cell. It now appears that genes can even bud out of the cell and multiply themselves in other cells. So they are much more fluid and active components of our physical being than we realised. This raises the question, "Who is controlling the genes? If the genes are not governing me, and I am not my genes, then who am I?"

For me, the answer is that I am actually quite distinct from the body; that I'm a soul, a unit of spiritual energy or consciousness. The soul can be envisaged as like a pinpoint, but that pinpoint is a window onto another dimension. Imagine a curtain with a tiny hole, and daylight on the other side. If you stand back from it, it will appear to be like a tiny star, but if you go close to it and peep through, you will see into another world. A huge range of options exists behind that curtain, that we can draw on to inform and

The electron doesn't exist as a specific particle until the observer observes it. It takes consciousness to bring that electron into being as a particle.

energise ourselves. We have forgotten that we have that dimension of our being behind the curtain, and generally we're only seeing and thinking about what lies on this side, our physical side. To look through the pinpoint is an important step for releasing or unleashing our creativity.

Frontier science is supporting this different way of looking at ourselves and the world. Most of us live with the materialistic, scientific world view that sees matter as primary, the basis of all being, and any mind-like components of the world as secondary to matter, simply emerging from the complexity of the brain with its 100 billion neurons. This world view informs almost all radio and TV programmes, magazine and newspaper articles, and educational materials. But it is strongly challenged by findings in modern physics.

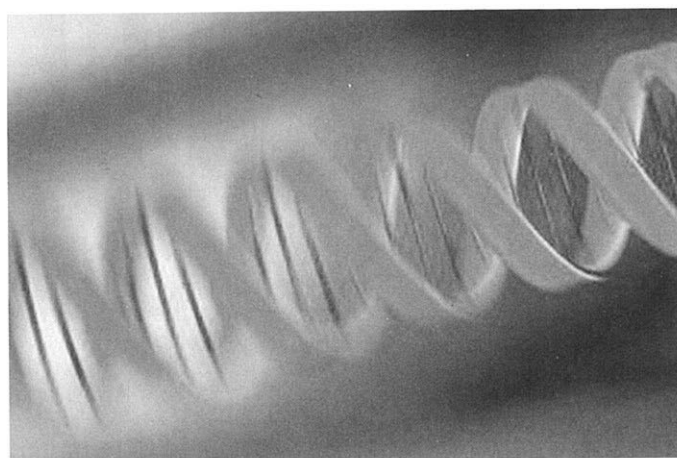
For a long time, the model of the atom was the same as the model of planets and stars, with sub-atomic particles interacting with each other in orbits dictated by the forces between them. But at the very tiny level, when you get inside the atom itself, you move from that kind of fixed action and reaction template to something that is much more dynamic; and that involves consciousness.

The new paradigm stems from the discovery that particles such as electrons can't truly be said to be in orbit around the nucleus of the atom. In theoretical physics, scientists no longer speak of the sub-atomic particles as orbiting the nucleus. Instead, they refer to a mathematical term called the wave function, that describes what is more like a cloud of possibilities of where an observer will find the electron if he looks for it with a measuring instrument.

The electron doesn't exist as a specific particle until the observer observes it. It takes consciousness to bring that electron into being as a particle. Before that, it has an existence that is determined only by the equations of quantum physics, a wave-like description of the probabilities of where you may find that electron if you look for it. The wave function, the mathematical term for this diffused range of possibilities, isn't a material particle. Only when you actually go in and observe does that electron manifest, at a particular point, and all the other possibilities disappear.

Quantum physics works. Understanding its laws has led to many practical developments, including lasers and

microprocessors. Yet most scientists agree that, while it represents a deeper and more fundamental level of reality than the classical physics that governs the rules of bigger objects, it is at root a big puzzle. In my view, that is because of the dominance of the world view that matter is the basis of existence. It is no longer so puzzling if you bring in a different interpretation of what is going on, called the consciousness-based paradigm.



Consciousness-based paradigm

This is a revolution in the making for all of us; the reverse of the materialistic way of thinking. Scientists who are developing this paradigm speak of the ground of being, the fundamental reality, as being thought-like. They speak of consciousness as being the 'stuff' of the universe, giving rise to matter. They have come to this conclusion, not from a religious perspective, but because they believe quantum physics demands that we should understand this. At its most fundamental level, matter requires an observer to come into being - that's the implication of what they are describing. These scientists are saying that matter only comes into being when consciousness brings it into being. The quantum equations describe a range of possibilities, but matter only manifests when one of those possibilities is selected by consciousness, and at that point all the other possibilities disappear - the term used is 'the collapse of the wave-function'. A choice is made.

Although these quantum laws became apparent only within the atom, the theorists argue that, since the entire material universe is made up of sub-atomic particles, the whole universe must require consciousness to bring it into being and to shape the way it evolves. It's not that a single

human being, as an individual unit of consciousness, has to observe everything in order for it to exist. If I walk into a dark room unaware of a table in it, I will still hack my ankles on it. But consciousness in some deeper and wider sense is seen as the creative and unitive force in the universe and each of us, as conscient beings, are contributing to that creative process.

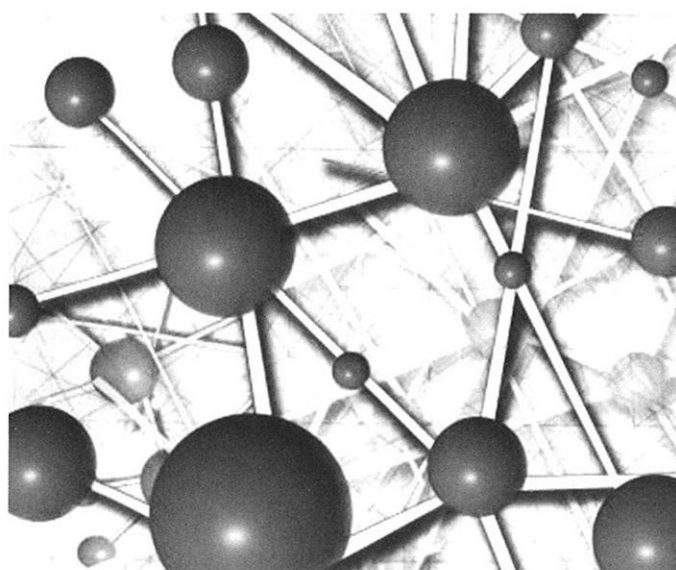
This new way of thinking may not come as a surprise to many, especially those who are more creatively inclined anyway. You may not have bought so much into materialistic science and its descriptions of the world as I had done. I grew up pinning my hopes on science for a better world, thinking for many years that all there was to life was matter and that we were best off facing this reality. I saw mind as an epiphenomenon of brain function, the cream on the cake of evolutionary development. However, this new theory underlines that mind is the fundamental stuff of the universe and that matter is shaped by mind. For me, understanding this is the starting point for unleashing our creative potential.

The theorists working with this new paradigm say that the detailed nature of consciousness and its workings may not be something that science can necessarily tell us about. Science is simply pointing towards the role that consciousness plays in shaping and creating the physical world. Science has not told us how to define consciousness, or about souls or God.

However, the consciousness-based paradigm is much more supportive and more easily integrated with a spiritual perspective on life than with the materialistic world view. The spiritual perspective offered by the Brahma Kumaris also has a profoundly creative as well as unitive quality to it. In the same way as Shakespeare would work out in his mind the plot of Macbeth, for example, before anything appeared on the stage, it says that the drama of life works within an overall plan. Yet because we are ourselves beings of consciousness, not matter – actors, not the costumes or the props on the stage – we are not the prisoners of matter that we thought we were. We have much more potential, in our mind, to alter our fate, our future, than we have realised.

So, if I'm not my genes, who am I? I would say that I am a unit within this field or play of consciousness. I'm a conscient entity. I am a part of this whole. Like an actor within the play, I have my own part. I'm an individual. I make my own choices, even though those choices will have to fit in with the overall scheme of things, the overall script.

Quantum physics works. Understanding its laws has led to many practical developments, including lasers and microprocessors. Yet most scientists agree that, while it represents a deeper and more fundamental level of reality than the classical physics that governs the rules of bigger objects, it is at root a big puzzle.

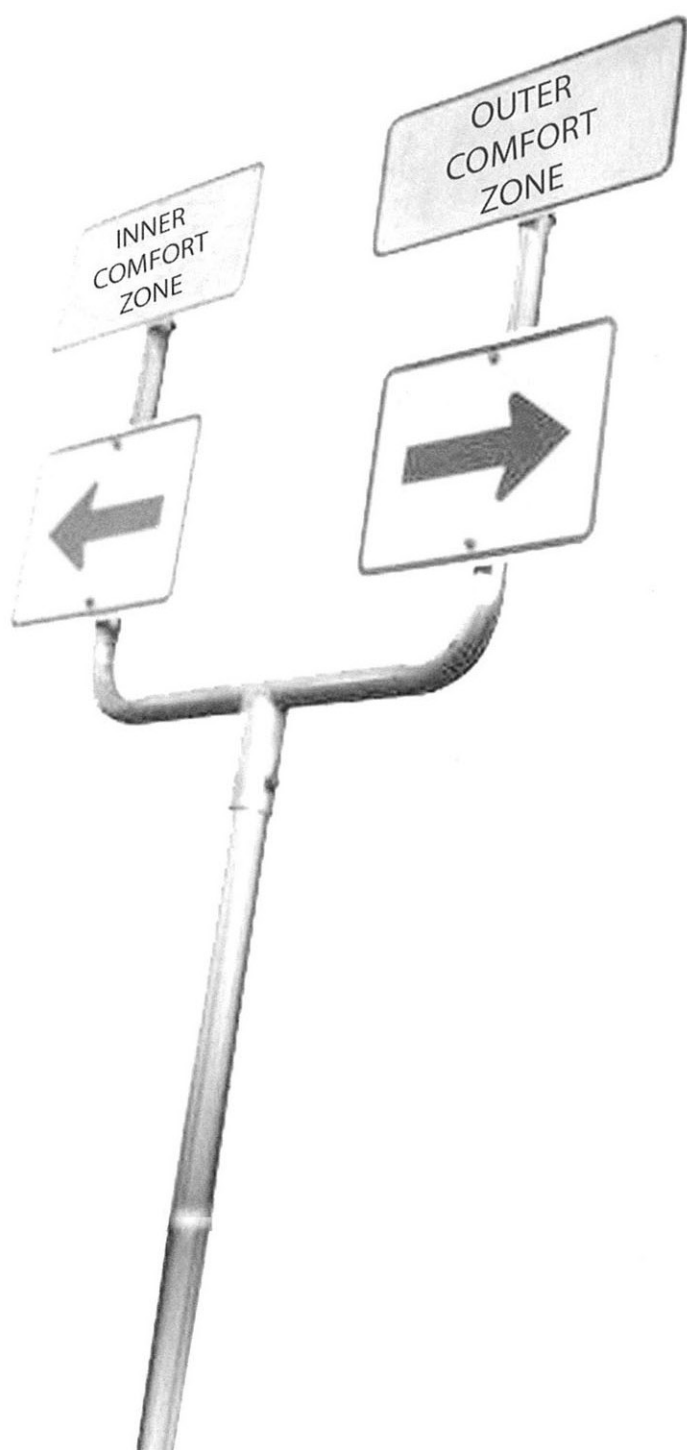


One reason why we've been reluctant to think in this way is that, when things don't go well, we like to think that it's because of forces outside our control. This helps us to evade a sense of responsibility. The new way of thinking gives responsibility back to us. It doesn't blame us, because there is still the overall scheme, but within that, there is also the loss and regaining of the power that we do have as individuals. When we've lost that power, it is easy just to blame outside circumstances for our suffering, and a little nerve-wracking to think that we could regain the strength to really change our lives and our future. It feels easier to blame the bad-tempered boss, the unco-operative spouse or the badly behaved children for our problems, than to find solutions from within ourselves. We have a huge power. Whether you get to it from a spiritual perspective or from this new science, this new paradigm helps in having an attitude of 'can do' in terms of being creative in your life.

Neville Hodgkinson is an author, writer and journalist. Previously with the Sunday Times his books include Will to Be Well and Aids: the Failure of Contemporary Science ❖

LIVING PATTERNS

Lee James comes out of his comfort zone to tell us what it means to be 'in the zone'!



1 have been living in Japan for eleven years. Originally from Cairns, Australia, I went down to Brisbane to study psychology, and then to Sydney to do training in acting. I was a professional actor for eight years and during that time I became more interested in human behaviour, especially in psychology. Trauma psychology is my speciality but I really didn't feel that it was transforming people in the way they wished to be transformed. At the age of twenty-three, after graduating, I was moving onto a promising acting career. I was in my comfort zone, very comfortable with the attention I got. I came across authentic spirituality when giving a speech at a peace conference in Sydney. At the conference, there was a Pulitzer Prize winner author, they had me (the TV star) and the peace activist. I thought it was really cool - what power! I spoke passionately and everyone gave me a standing ovation. It felt wonderful doing these socially active talks and transforming people's lives. While pretending to be humble, I saw four women in white saris walk out like swans in water and I was stunned. For the first time in my life, I realised myself to be a total fake and that the extent of my lie was very deep. Watching them floating out of the hall, I thought, "That's peace, that's what I want to be" and I remembered being like that as a child - honest and clean, no pretence or tension. The evening at the conference was the changing point. Twenty-three years old and still not knowing what to do but wanting to find out about the cleanliness and naturalness in those four women who just graced the atmosphere.

In the games that we play with each other, because of the fears we have, we start to create comfort zones. We start putting ourselves in prison cells. We hope that we can move from here to there without too much change, challenges or threats to our idea of our self. The whole foundation of a comfort zone is created on the basis of who I think I am. When I met those people in white again, I started de-programming. To get back to the time that I felt comfortable with myself, as a child, to get beyond the masks, I began to meditate and would eventually make it a daily practice.

Actors love making people feel uncomfortable. We love it; we don't want to hurt people. Actors themselves are very delicate and sensitive to being hurt. We call it the edge, because the whole basis of drama is crisis and tension.

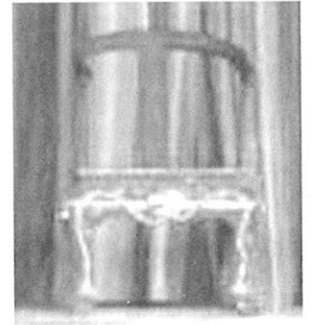
Spontaneity

As actors, we have to be spontaneous, but we also use spontaneity, lean on it and use it as a support. At the same time however, we are afraid, because from our spontaneity we expect to get a reaction. Our whole craft is based on the expression of an inner experience and then the need for feedback. That's a dangerous way to live because people are just not going to respond the way you expect.

The spontaneity that we use as actors is coming from a fast, noisy mind. A creativity in which it feels as if you can think of a thousand ideas in a second. About twice a year I used to do a show called 'An evening with Lee James' in the theatre for about fifteen hundred people. It was always booked out. I would sit on the stage with some musicians, a lighting guy, some sound effects, props and music that I hadn't chosen. Someone from the audience would give a name, someone else the age, the job and the story would begin. When I was internally very cool and quiet, I found that the imagination just flowed, but it also revealed where my mind was at. Sometimes the evenings were shocking or disgusting - just horrible. Nobody left peaceful. People felt it was wonderful, they loved it, people came to see it again and again but it was a horror, all my rubbish was vomiting out onto the audience. The spontaneity in this scenario was born out of a heated energy - a process of imagination which doesn't come from a clear or an honest mind, but from one which has motives. I remember, no matter how quietly I sat before the show, my motive was to show my talent, skill or how wild I could be.

What I've found is that when we're honest, truly spontaneous, with no hidden agenda, then people can think about themselves, not about others or about what I'm doing on the stage. My experience has been that, when my ego is under control and I just offer in a selfless manner, the audience is able to gain a deeper experience about themselves whilst watching the show. And that allows them to begin a journey of thinking, that hasn't been touched for a long time. They've actually said that the openness and vulnerability of my performance made them yearn for that honest and cool place inside themselves.

When I spontaneously react to some external trigger, then I naturally come into an emotion. In psychology, the term emotion means 'a kind of reaction to' or 'a way of processing a perception'. When the motive is to create an external reaction, there's that extroversion in my spontaneity, and this results in attention being drawn only to myself. This spontaneity doesn't do any healing, it doesn't bring people to themselves. There's no real relationship, because nothing is shared.



Dharma – Choices in Patterns

The source to purify one's own spontaneous reaction is internal, the conscience, the inner voice. The conscience is our elevated self. It is our deep, subtle memory of our highest state of being.

The term 'dharma' is sometimes carelessly translated as 'religion', but that's not the meaning. 'Dharma' means 'the right path for you'. At every moment there is one right choice, a perfect choice, that creates absolute harmony for you. There is very little expenditure and a lot of return from the action that you do. When the mind is silent then the creativity is aligned to my dharma. I am on my path to my destination to my highest self.

Actors love making people feel uncomfortable. We love it; we don't want to hurt people. Actors themselves are very delicate and sensitive to being hurt. We call it the edge, because the whole basis of drama is crisis and tension. We lead our lives creating tension and crisis for other people, then resolving it. When you go to the theatre, you pay lots of money to watch a crisis, watch it being resolved and then you go home feeling good. The whole basis of theatre is created on this kind of edge.

So, what is it that feels comfortable and how did it become a comfort zone? By repeating something, it becomes a pattern. To do something new, I have to come

The essential thing is to keep moving forward, and to be successful is to be able to adjust quickly to change at a very fast speed. Comfort zones feel good, but they don't allow you to make the right choices.

out of the self and see what is currently in front of me. I have to renew my vision and become aware of the present moment, to challenge myself. There's that little fear, that I'll have to change. This is the greatest concern and, as a result, many negative thoughts can come.

Actors love taking people out of their comfort zones, by bringing up certain taboo subjects such as religion, sexuality, race. In Japan, I'm very careful not to drag people out of their comfort zones, by some kind of controversial remarks. It's not for others to challenge us. Actors can do it from the stage, because from the darkness of the theatre, you can allow yourself to be challenged. It's for us to challenge ourselves. I'm not saying comfort zones are bad, they're not negative, but they stop you knowing yourself. You can't show your highest state of being. Every day you wake up to unconsciously pursuing your highest self. When you watch a movie with values, it's positive and beautiful, you come out being inspired. We don't say, "Wasn't that inspiring?", "Wasn't he beautiful?", "Wasn't she so warm and tender?" We say, "Wasn't that a good movie?" We communicate in phrases which have also become comfort zones. The reason for that is tiredness. We're exhausted, because our motivations are coming from noise, from movement, not from silence.

To live in the city in Japan is so physically tiring and the mass consciousness is so dense. Even though people create a personal space, after a while, the space is no longer personal, but a wall or a guard against something new. When I went to Japan, I had the idea that people were very tolerant. Their manners are extremely good and polite. In public, I found that the mass persona is refined, because it's not a multicultural society, but a monoculture. The Japanese people find it very hard to adjust to change. What were once personal and respected spaces have become zones of "Don't cross!", "Don't come here!", "Stay there and I'm going to work within my pattern here!" This has caused Japan, the second largest economy in the world, to be unable to do what all economies must do now, which is adjust to change.

The essential thing is to keep moving forward, and to be successful is to be able to adjust quickly to change at a very fast speed. Comfort zones feel good, but they don't allow you to make the right choices. For example, if you live with the same person for more than 2 years and you find that the level or the quality of communication is reducing, then that's because you're both actually starting to hide behind your own comfort zones. Rather than say things to each other, you've started not to say things to each other. The future of the relationship is one where they just work in between each other, in a kind of convenience. This is not good for personal growth. In all relationships we must grow.

My job in Japan is partly with people dying with terminal diseases. When people are dying, they don't regret what they did do, but what they didn't do. Imagine you're walking along the path of life and a spontaneous thought comes, "I should pick up that person's phone card that they just dropped and give it to them." That experience, that karma, would ricochet through the society. That person would do something for someone else, and it goes on and on and on. But you don't pick up the card, and that split second will come to you when you're dying.

Over the years, I have witnessed more than two thousand deaths. I've been there in the hospital with them and that's what people regret, sometimes consciously and at other times during delirium. When the poison starts to build up and infest the body, especially in stomach and liver cancer patients, all you hear is, "I should have..." They're





little things which, when you speak to them later, many of them say they have no recall whatsoever of what they said. All those little micro thoughts you have, all those little moments when you see and sense what to do, that's your dharma, that's your path, that's you. You are the one who picks up that phone card, because you had the thought. If you see it, but you don't think it, that's OK too. If you have a gross motive, for praise or for appreciation, then there's no joy. If it's a spontaneous thought, do it and move on. Then there's joy, selflessness spreads outward and the society changes. That's your right path – your dharma.

Ultimate spontaneity is when you have a thought to do something that is positive, kind, beautiful, loving - do it immediately. If you do, you'll do it again. If you don't, then you'll regret it. I have the aim, when I die, whether it's in a second or over a few months, that the final condition of my mind, the final thought, will lead me to my destination. There are two types of destination: a loving condition, when your heart is giving out energy, and a divorced condition, when you're in need. There are only two ways the energy can be going – out or in, serving and loving or taking and needing. A loving intellect is a loving mind, that stems from stillness and brings into action instantly every spontaneous generosity that comes into the mind.

Every one of us is completely unique, because we move through life having done completely different actions. The

ultimate meaning of the word 'dharma', in the context of religion, is that the original condition and therefore nature of the soul is peace. If your thoughts, words and actions bring peace to yourself and others, then this is your path.

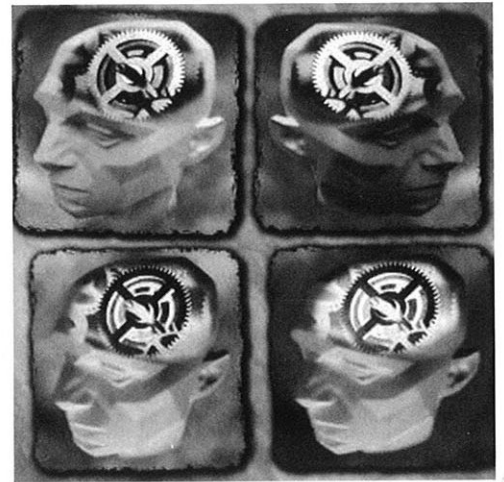
When I'm working in the hospital and I walk in and see patients lying there connected to machines, I have to be entirely open. If my mind is still then I'll say the first thing that comes into my mind. It could be anything, but I always find that when it comes from the quiet place within, the spontaneous, quiet mind, it's right. The dharma is there, it resolves, it gives them worth and they come to peace.

To catch the feelings of others, I have to first of all see my motive. I have to be free from motive myself. You have to have an altruistic aim in your service of humanity. It can be a smile in a bank when there is a big line. To do that you have to be fresh and refreshed every day. If you are not in a state of well-being then you will want regard, acceptance, recognition, something. It's natural because there is a deficit internally. This is why meditation becomes a daily exercise in seeing there is no deficit and all that is within us is not just for ourselves.

Lee James is an Actor, Artistic Director of The Light Company and a Life Support/Post Trauma Counsellor based in Sydney.



MENDED MINDS



Tijn Touber in conversation with Martin Wuttke

Modern afflictions like stress, fatigue, depression and hyperactivity can affect the brain. Martin Wuttke has developed a training programme that helps to harmonise brain frequencies. His treatment removes most of the static, so that the brain can heal. Tijn Touber meets a pioneer with a mission.

1n the video that Martin Wuttke shows his audience, a bobsled loses control on a bend. The woman in the sled is Ann Abernathy. In painful slow motion we watch the sled begin to spin before eventually slamming against the side. Abernathy's head makes a strange cracking noise. The sled speeds on, the woman lies unconscious on the track. The audience is shocked. Wuttke, one of the most prominent neurofeedback specialists in the world and founder of the Neurotherapy Centers for Health in Atlanta, does not flinch. He has seen the film many times. But Wuttke does not need the drama that many of his fellow countrymen add to their presentations. He is a man of few words and gestures.

Later in the video, we see that Ann Abernathy suffers increasingly from blackouts – she suddenly loses consciousness at the strangest times. Her co-ordination is off. Her career and her life are ruined. A few shots later, we see her sitting at a computer screen with lots of electrodes connected to her head. The screen shows three rockets in flight. Abernathy's assignment is to let the middle rocket fly ahead, while keeping the other two stable. Abernathy does not have a joystick or mouse in her hand. The rockets move to the rhythm of her brainwaves. Whenever she generates the correct waves, the rockets move in the right direction.

Wuttke explains, “A blow to the head, whiplash, excessive stress or an emotional trauma can cause damage to the brain. The brain then goes into a sort of state of shock. In general terms, it becomes locked into an abnormal wave pattern. Certain neural paths become unstable and this can result in fear, depression, irritation, fatigue, hyperactivity, mood swings, confusion and sleeping disorders, amongst other things.”

The computer animation program with the rockets is just one of the many that Wuttke uses to help people recover from ailments like whiplash or chronic stress. According to Wuttke, these afflictions originate from damage to the brain. Each affliction in turn causes another one. Treatments are directed at helping to integrate the parts of the brain that are not integrated, due to emotional trauma or damage. If the brain becomes balanced again – that is, if the natural rhythm of the brainwaves is restored – then the rest of the system can repair itself.

In one of the most appealing computer programs, you have to get a dolphin to swim in a smooth line. Wuttke adjusts the program for each patient so that the more a certain kind of brainwave is produced, the more smoothly the dolphin moves. “When specific brain activity increases, the memory and emotional trauma that the imbalance causes can reoccur. Via the electrodes, I connect the

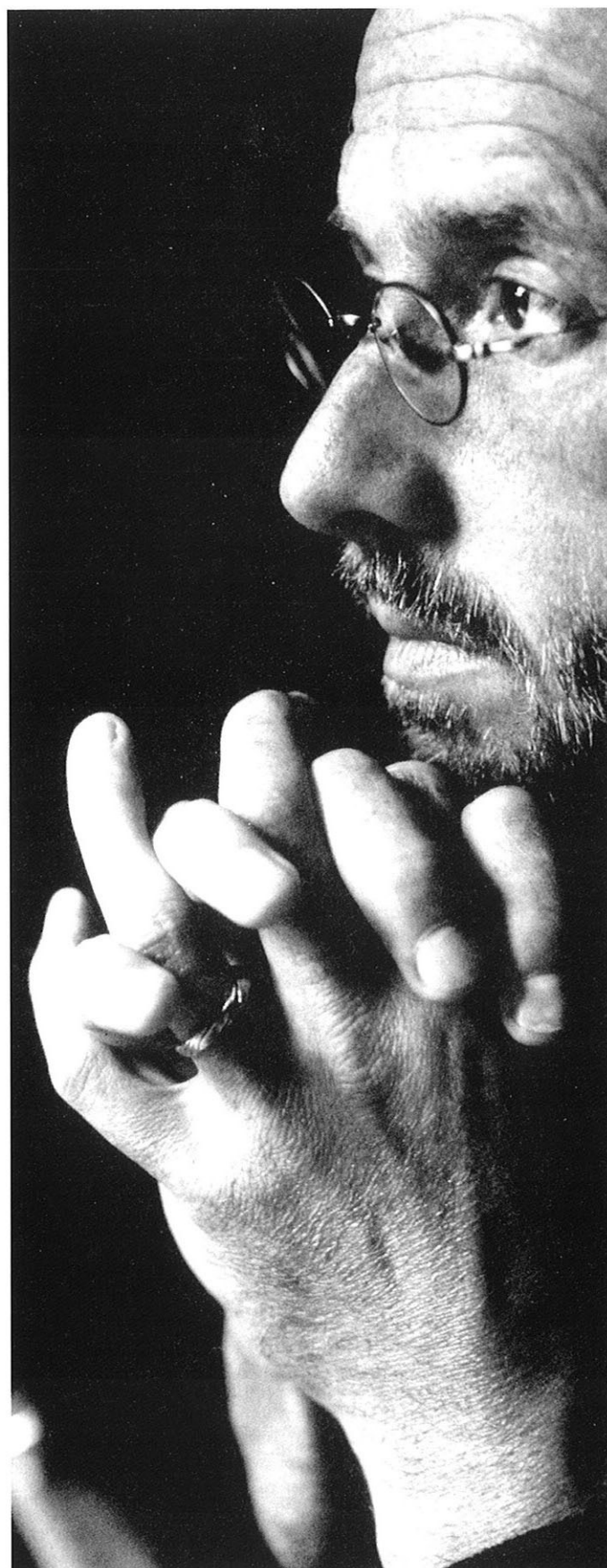
emotional memory and the rational part of the brain with each other, making the two sides more identical and causing them to vibrate synchronically. By adding rational thinking to the emotionally charged events, the events are seen in a different perspective. They become less weighty and more integrated." This process is also called 'reframing the experience'.

The exercises are part of the neurofeedback - or EEG Biofeedback - training that Wuttke has helped to develop with other colleagues. What makes the training interesting is that it is a subconscious learning process. It does not demand any special intelligence or awareness. You only need to be able to sit at the computer and play the game. Whenever you produce the right brainwaves, you are rewarded by the dolphin swimming without any erratic movements or the rocket going in the right direction. Generally 10 to 15 sessions of about 45 minutes are necessary for the patient to become familiar with the feelings associated with producing specific waves. Depending on the severity and type of disorder, around 40 sessions are needed to repair imbalances and generate lasting results. At this point the brain takes over and the system corrects itself.

At the end of his lecture, Wuttke takes time to clarify the complicated subject matter. His relaxed attitude is a result of the enormous library of active knowledge that Wuttke possesses on the subject. This is a man who knows what he is talking about and, most importantly, is able to refer to an archive of first-hand experience.

"We have now come so far," says Wuttke, "that we can see where the damage is localised in the brain. By using what is called QEEG (Quantitative electro-encephalogram) we are able to chart the brain frequencies, which is called brain mapping. You can see exactly what part of the brain lags behind (doesn't show enough activity) or which parts are overactive."

The photographs Wuttke shows give volumes of information - at least for those who can read them. Experience has taught Wuttke how to discern whether, for example, someone has been abused during their childhood or whether they have more likely 'only' been a witness to abuse. He can see if someone is under a lot of pressure and reacts to it constructively, or if someone is drowning in it. The scans tell the story. "Some people say that they have forgiven their parents and that they love humanity. I look at the scan and have to sometimes conclude that their brain is telling another story," says Wuttke.



Research in prisons show that many prisoners have abnormal QEEG's, up to 80% in the 'heaviest institutions'. The abnormalities may stem from a blow to the head, but in most cases they are the result of an experience that has developed an electrical circuit in the brainstem or emotional brain.

Martin Wuttke - 'Marty' to friends - has experienced a lot in his relatively short life (46). After a seven-year addiction to heroin nearly killed him, he went through a spiritual experience, which he would later describe as an awakening. It left him with one desire: to meditate. After several years in an ashram, he happened to stumble across a huge psychiatric institution in a nearby town. He began to give meditation classes there and quickly became a member of the staff.

For ten years, Wuttke worked at the institution, applying his knowledge to patients suffering from afflictions such as depression, hyperactivity, eating disorders, addiction, chronic pain, fatigue and stress. He treated more than 1,500 patients and saw that every ailment demanded a separate type of treatment. Wuttke remembers the first days. "The results were phenomenal. I always had 35 patients at my disposal whom I could treat twice a day. The successes were – and still are - incredible. In the category of present day common illnesses - chronic fatigue, ADHD and addiction - the success rate was about 70% to 80%."

In order to understand how the healing process in neurofeedback exactly works, a certain amount of knowledge about the brain is necessary. "The brain consists of three levels. First you have the brain stem - the oldest part - that regulates the basic functions of the body, like breathing and all the processes that you do not have to think about. This is where qualities like surviving, instinct, fear and safety are located. The second level can be called the emotional brain. This is where many of our positive and negative emotional reactions are located. The third part, the neocortex, is what distinguishes us from most animals. This is where rational thinking takes place, which enables us to see the consequences of our actions and to make comparative assessments," Wuttke explains.

Research in prisons show that many prisoners have abnormal QEEG's, up to 80% in the 'heaviest institutions'. The abnormalities may stem from a blow to the head, but in most cases they are the result of an experience that has developed an electrical circuit in the brainstem or emotional brain. When someone feels extremely threatened, a pattern is created which, the more often it is repeated, can grow to become an obsession or compulsiveness that stands in the way of clear thinking.

"We all know that feeling," says Wuttke. "Why do I keep doing this?' or 'Why can't I end this relationship?' and so on and so on. These are repeated patterns that cause suffering and, in the end, often lead to psychiatric help or pills. By not being able to think clearly, the digit-span decreases - that is, the ability to take in a specific amount of information and to process and reproduce it." Most people are able to remember seven numbers and reproduce them when they hear them randomly called out one after another. Among criminals that average is four.

Drug abuse is one of many challenges facing today's society. Wuttke thinks that drugs damage the ability to assess the consequences of what you do. He is working on projects for prisons to use his methods to repair the damage, so that the chances of falling back into old habits decrease. Research in the Canadian province of Ontario has shown that, after the first four sessions, 65% of prisoners fell back into their old patterns. By the 16th session, that number had dropped to 40%. By the 34th session, it was down to 20%. In the United States, judges sometimes require neurofeedback therapy as a condition for someone accused of a crime to be let out on bail or probation.

In the case of his own addiction, Wuttke needed a spiritual experience to break the cycle. "I cannot give people this kind of spontaneous insight. What we can do with neurofeedback is to give the brain the ability to take on this sort of experience. We can get rid of the static and harmonise and assist the development of the brain so that you have the ability to look deep within and find yourself again. I see it happen regularly. We even have a joke about it, 'Who will see God today?'"

Wuttke extensively studied the clear moments of deep insight, because he is aware of how important they can be to people's development. "In my work in the psychiatric institution, I realised that it is best to measure these types of experiences within the brain itself. In the scans, you see that something is happening. You see the wave patterns change. Such experiences always have to do with surrendering, with letting go. The brain relaxes and is able to get out of the vicious cycle of stress. Deep insight can develop as a result of this relaxation. It gives back the clarity needed to make good decisions.

The neurofeedback equipment not only provides peace and harmony, but also stimulates underdeveloped parts of the brain. When a part wakes up, people see things from a completely different perspective. That can feel uncomfortable," says Wuttke. "You are pulled out of this worn-in pattern and think, 'My God, why didn't I realise this earlier? How could I have been so locked up?' These moments can be seen very clearly on the QEEG. These are the moments of actual change."

Wuttke's urge to help people with mental, emotional and spiritual disorders was further boosted when his son Jacob was born with a severe brain defect. Wuttke set up a special school for him, Jacob's Ladder, where students received specially geared lessons. As if life hadn't tested him enough, his marriage fell apart too. But Wuttke bounced back to find the love of his life, Susan Colpitts. Colpitts, however, was on the verge of dying, due to a neurological disorder. She was suffering from a serious auto-immune disease, bone marrow dysfunction, a complete system breakdown. Wuttke was able to re-animate her by using neurofeedback, along with other methods.

It has become clear to Wuttke that almost all illnesses - except for perhaps chronic pain - are a result of some kind of system breakdown. "These breakdowns take place as a result of the way the three brain parts work together," says Wuttke. Take smoking, the neocortex knows very well that smoking is unhealthy. But at the level of the limbic system, it is a question of self-preservation. This kind of programming puts the individual into a permanent state of stress.

Wuttke is aware that most people do not recognise the warning signs telling them that their system is on the verge of a breakdown. "For example, signals like needing to take an aspirin or indigestion tablets every day. Many people become prisoners of a vicious cycle of stress. Your sympathetic nervous system, which is also responsible for increasing the heart rate and producing adrenaline, is working overtime - should I fight or run? That causes a permanent state of stress.

This can mean that the entire system breaks down, which in turn causes you to become ill. But usually, you first see an overcompensation reaction of the parasympathetic nervous system which works as a brake and makes sure that the sympathetic nervous system is not overreacting. An overcompensating parasympathetic nervous system can cause afflictions such as asthma, migraines, irritable bowel syndrome and panic attacks. The worse the trauma, the deeper it can bury itself in the brain. If it goes too deep, it will inhibit the regulatory activity of

the brain stem. That's when it gets dangerous. The body will then start to attack itself - these are the common auto-immune diseases."

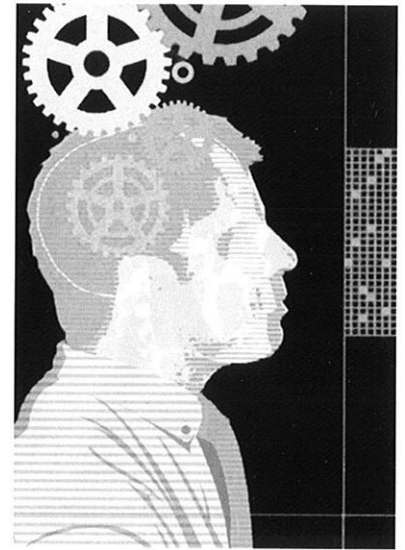
Even in these situations and in cases of serious neurological conditions like autism, Wuttke has been very successful. "One or two sessions a week are usually enough to bring about shifts in

the brain. The brain is an incredible organ that can learn at any given moment. I've even seen huge changes in the brains of 65-year-olds." Wuttke remembers an autistic child who could not communicate. Within two years, the child was attending a normal school. CNN reported the story. "The boy still comes in once a month 'for servicing'. He's a 'cool' lad, complete with screws in his earlobes."

Do these methods eventually make other methods of treatment superfluous? Are the days of psychotherapy, meditation and medication over? Wuttke says jokingly, "Finally, we can settle the score with psychiatrists and God." Then more seriously, "No. But neurofeedback does speed up the process. When the famous American psychiatrist Jack Woodward saw what neurofeedback does, he commented, "Changes that normally demand months and years to occur are accomplished in days and weeks with this method." If we can recognise our own divinity by direct attention to our deepest essence, then we will be able to get in touch with the self-healing capacity of our body. This day will come. I see the signs all around me. More and more people are waking up."

Waking up others and promoting the neurofeedback is Wuttke's mission in life. However, he is cautious and realistic. "We don't have any ready-made solutions for every problem yet. There are no easy answers. The neurofeedback system is just one component in an array of methods that we can apply. But after everything that I have experienced and tried, I can easily say that it is one of the most powerful components."

*First appeared in Ode Magazine - www.odemagazine.com
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THE HEALING POWER OF LAUGHTER

Margaret McCathie reminds us why laughter is healthy, needed even by the wealthy, and is definitely wise.



1 It is well known that a good laugh does you good, because every time you laugh you exercise seventeen different muscles in your face, it increases oxygen levels in the body and releases endorphins (feel good hormones) around your body. It brings a sense of freshness into your home or workplace, costs nothing and is one of the best stress relievers known. In medical terms it is called Eustress because it has the opposite effects to stress.

Stress increases blood pressure, but laughter reduces it. Stress depresses the immune system causing a person

to be more susceptible to illness, but laughter elevates it. Stress also affects sleep creating patterns of insomnia, laughter can cure it. Stress lowers our energy levels (physical, mental, emotional), whereas laughter picks them up.

In 1964, Norman Cousins was diagnosed with a painful and incurable inflammation-type disease. He checked out of hospital and into a hotel. He believed in the benefits of positive attitude and did not believe that the hospital environment was conducive to healing. In his hotel room he spent the next two weeks watching

comedy programmes on TV and reading books that made him laugh. He later wrote, "I made the discovery that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anaesthetic effect which lasted for at least 2 hours, giving me 2 hours pain-free sleep." He recovered from his condition and spent the rest of his life teaching the medical benefits of laughter. Laughter can also be a great benefit in the workplace. In a recent scientific study, laughter therapy was found to improve the work of 30 students at a Malaysian university. The students found it relaxed them and helped them focus on their studies. They slept better and felt healthier.

In all my workshop I find that when people laugh together it instantly breaks down any artificial barriers. It always promotes better communication and team spirit, healing any internal conflict in the workplace. This is why a growing number of businesses are turning to laughter therapists as an alternative method of teambuilding and tackling stress problems. They recognise it helps staff to see the lighter side of life while staying focused on their role within the company.

In India there is a Doctor called Dr. Kataria who runs laughter clubs. His book is called Laugh for No Reason. He has devised laughter sessions that are very like yoga classes. They begin at a certain time every morning with laughing for 20 minutes, starting with HaHa... HeeHee... HoHo until there is uproarious laughter. It is a tremendous way to start the day and frequently ends up with participants spontaneously breaking out into laughter for the rest of day.

Steve Wilson is a laughter therapist who runs the World Laughter Tour. He trains people to teach others how to laugh. The work of a laughter therapist is simply to help people see the funnier side of life. They believe that each and every moment is what you make of it, that you can take it extremely seriously, or you can look at it differently and always see the lighter side. Every situation has a lighter side. The work of a laughter therapist is also about respecting that not everyone is ready to be uproarious or outrageous, allowing people to choose their level of participation so that nobody feels threatened or self-conscious.

Patch Adams is a wonderful doctor who believes that the combination of laughter and love are the best medicine. Patch has proved time and again in his work as a doctor, that laughter is a cure. He has made such an impact that millions have now seen the film based on his life and work. He even travels to war zones to bring laughter and joy, sometimes taking 40 clowns with him. They consist of doctors, nurses, therapists and lay people



A Big Deep Laugh

Take a deep breath in.

On the exhalation from the belly, start with haha... heehee... then... hoho

Do this three times

Then, focus on your face

Be aware of your eyes, see them smiling

Then go down to your nose

See your nose smiling

Then your mouth

Stretch your mouth into a great big cheesy grin

Imagine your heart breaking out into a big smile of gratitude

Then take a few minutes just thinking about everything that is wonderful in your life, and be grateful for your blessings

Take that smile into your day at work or at home.

Keep your heart connected to your face

You are the sunshine for others as you brighten the day of everyone that you meet

Seriously Though ... Laughter Works Here's why!

THE MEDICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER

(All sources quoted are American scientific journals)

- **Laughter** reduces cortisol, which is a hormone that causes stress and increases endorphins, which are the body's own natural opiates – they make you happy! Therefore when you laugh, the production of endorphins in your body keeps you feeling good for ages (American Journal of the Medical Sciences).
- **Laughter** eases muscle tension, which can be good for rheumatism (Southern Medical Journal)
- **Laughter** increases the body's T-Cell count, which are cells of the immune system that kill outside invading bacteria harmful to the body. Laughter also increases Lymphocyte Blastogenesis, which, put simply, means that the immune system works faster and more efficiently (Journal of Clinical Research)
- **Laughter** aids ventilation and helps clear mucus plugs, which is good for respiratory conditions like emphysema (Journal of the American Medical Association)
- **Laughter** induces an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, which exercises the myocardium and increases blood circulation causing a rise in the volume of oxygen and nutrients that are pumped to the tissues (Journal of Biological Psychology)
- **Laughter** increases catecholamines, which are known to boost mental function. Therefore laughter improves mental alertness, memory and interpersonal responsiveness (Journal of the American Medical Association)
- **Laughter** enhances blood oxygen levels and boosts circulation (Journal of Biological Psychology). This is particularly important in combating cancer, because cancer needs an oxygen-depleted body to survive (Credence).
- **Laughter** increases pain tolerance (New England Journal of Medicine)
- **Laughter** reduces the rate of cellular decay, thus slowing down the rate of aging (Journal of the American Medical Association)
- **Laughter** brings about an emotional high, which can enable problems to be seen from a different perspective, especially those of a stressful nature (Psychological Reviews)



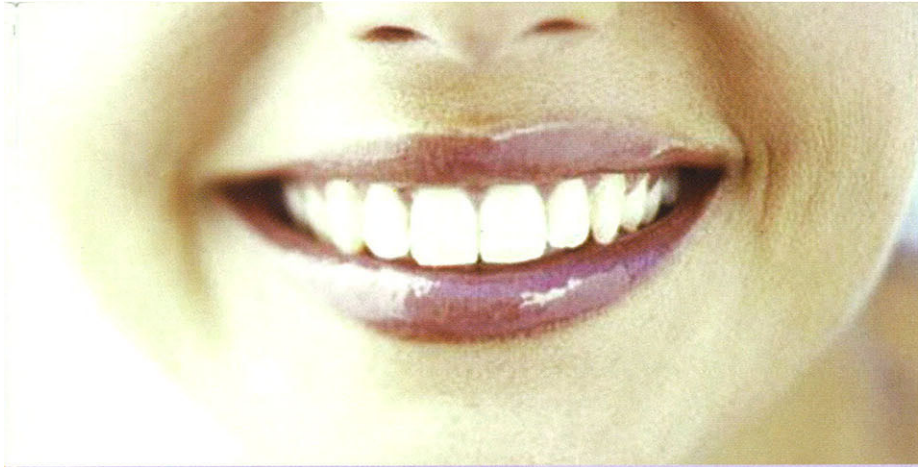
whose only qualification is a desire to serve in a loving and caring way. They dress as clowns so as to not be threatening to anyone of any age group. It is not the type of clown that would splash a pie in your face, but a caring clown, bringing fun and laughter to hospitals, prisons, old peoples homes and orphanages.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if hospitals offices prisons and schools had a laughter room instead of a smoking room. Patch Adams came to Scotland in the year 2000 to run a laughter workshop in the City Chambers in Edinburgh. The workshop was filmed by Swiss Television and a film was made called In Bed with Patch Adams. It shows him helping a man who was suffering with depression. Patch is in bed with the man helping him to practise laughter exercises. It was wonderful to watch someone who had a laughphobia, getting in touch with the lighter side of their dark nature and just laughing.

In May, I will travel to China with Patch and, as a laughter therapist, help him bring a smile to hearts and minds of many Chinese. And then in June I will run a laughter workshop at the request of the Dalai Lama, who both carries and lives up to the legacy of the laughing Buddha.

When I was little, I would get in trouble for laughing in class at school. The teacher would put me outside the door because I would infect everyone else. Little did I know, that at the age of nearly 60, I would be teaching others how to chuckle, giggle and chortle their way through life. It's almost laughable really!

Margaret McCathie is an International Laughter Therapist working with companies and communities world wide. She can be contacted at caringclown@hotmail.com ❖



SMILE

A smile costs nothing.
but gives much.
It enriches those who receive ,
without making poorer those who give,
it takes but a moment,
yet the memory of it sometimes lasts for ever.

None is so rich and mighty
that he can get along without it,
and none is so poor
but than he can be made rich by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home,
fosters goodwill in the business
and is the countersign of friendship.

It brings rest to the weary,
cheer to the discouraged,
sunshine to the sad,
and it is nature's best antidote for trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought,
begged, borrowed or stolen
for it is something that is of no value to anyone
until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile,
give them one of yours
as none needs a smile so much
as he who has no more to give.

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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