



CONSEQUENCE & BEGINNINGS

December 2014
January 2015

Community:

**STOP ARCTIC
OCEAN BOMBING**

Wellness:

**HEALED BY THE
GREAT BLUE WHALE**

Meditation:

YOU ARE THE WORLD

Yoga

**BEGINNING
EVERY MOMENT**

Nutrition:

**CONSCIOUS
CONSUMPTION**



PLEASE SIGN
THE PETITIONS

STOP
SEABED
BOMBING

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Parvati.org

About

Parvati Magazine is an online monthly magazine dedicated to awakened living. The name of the magazine is not about an individual person but a celebration of the goddess Parvati in Her incarnation as the awakened Earth.

Parvati Magazine is managed and written by volunteers who give their time and talent to help build a regular source of information and inspiration for all who seek to live an awakened life, whether through personal development, spiritual practice, engaged activism or simply some fresh perspectives on arts and current affairs.

Submissions of 350-650 words may be considered for inclusion in Parvati Magazine if they are in keeping with the theme for a given month. Your article should be well-written and give clear and useful information that empowers the reader.

Columns with editorial openings include Yoga, Meditation, Wellness, Fashion, Books, Film, Music and Business.

For further information about editorial guidelines:
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A percentage of all proceeds is donated to the global charity **Embracing The World.**

Parvati Magazine supports the voice of **parvati.org** for a healthy planet.



Welcome

Welcome to the December 2014/January 2015 edition of Parvati Magazine! This special New Year's edition is a double issue on the themes Consequence and Beginnings. These themes are fitting as we look back at what we have learned from 2014 and towards the newness of 2015.

It has been an exceptionally busy fall as we prepare the launch of a new website for early 2015, complete with an online TV channel. (The site looks amazing and I can't wait to share it with you!)

In the midst of this, the unexpected happened, which gave birth to a whole new project. When I learned recently that the Canadian government has given clearance for oil companies to bomb the seabed of the Arctic Ocean, I felt profoundly shaken in the depth of my being. I knew that the consequence of these blasts would be harm and death to the magnificent whales and sea creatures.

In response, I initiated a movement and reached out to friends who share the concern to start a not-for-profit organization, parvati.org, a company that "will work to support a healthy environment and healthy people so that we have a healthy world." Our first campaign is to stop seismic bombing in the Arctic Ocean and ensure that the ocean and its inhabitants are protected. Time is of the essence, as the seismic work is scheduled to begin there this spring.

If you would like to help in this effort, please email me personally at parvati@parvati.org. Specifically we are looking for those who can research the companies involved and those who can support marketing the campaigns.

Enjoy this month's articles about the teachings of consequence and the potential in healthy beginnings.

Parvati

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COVER:
Parvati in character as
Natamba sings at the North
Pole to raise awareness of
the melting polar ice

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CONSEQUENCE

The Great Teacher



Consequences show us that limits are not obstacles but guideposts to actions that support greater health and total well-being.

We are constantly held within the perfect whole. An integral part of the fabric of the universe, we are never separate from anything that exists. However much we may feel that life is against us during difficult times, we are always loved by the compassionate and wise presence of life itself.

Consequence is one of life's best teachers. When we were children, we learned that fire burns when we tried to touch it. The physical pain taught us to never again reach into the flame. As we grow, we learn what burns, we learn what sings, and we learn what feels cooling and refreshing. We try to stay clear of the painful and move towards that which feels good.

Yet, as we mature as spiritual aspirants, we understand that being part of the whole, everything we experience supports our evolution in some way - even the uncomfortable and painful things. Our likes and

dislikes have little say in the lessons we are given along the spiritual path. In fact, being attached to likes and dislikes, the idea that something is for or against us, limits the way in which we can meet all of life with fullness and truly grow.

A Capricorn (an astrological sign ruled by Saturn, the great karmic teacher), I know first-hand that perceived limitations, restrictions and painful events are always blessings in disguise. The most immediate example of this in my life is the four months I spent paralyzed from the waist down, immobilized in bed due to a severe spinal cord injury. A mysterious and spontaneous consequence of the prayers and rituals I performed at the North Pole where I went in the fall of 2010 to do healing work on the planet, I woke up on the day of the Japanese tsunami in March 2011 in searing pain and with a severely injured spine. I would remain bed-ridden until the summer, in agony, in awe, being born into a whole new me.

I had to face the possibility of never being able to walk again, which doctors estimated was a likelihood – even after the spinal surgery they recommended for me. Instead of seeing this experience as against me, I knew somehow deep within that this was an expression of my innate interconnection with the planet. Rather than surgery, I chose to go within and fully meet this as a complete recalibration around a whole new axis – one I knew nothing about.

In surrender, I saw the consequence of my actions as a gift of karmic fast forward. In those months, I burned through deep karmic ties that had limited my ability to perceive the whole with greater clarity and insight. Out of it, a book was born, *Confessions of a Former Yoga Junkie: A Revolutionary Life Makeover for the Sincere Spiritual Seeker*, and a new me was born: freer, happier, wiser, lighter, more rooted, connected and whole than ever before.

Consequences show us that limits are not obstacles but guideposts to actions that support greater health and total well-being. They are never punishments from a judgmental universe, but compassionate guidance from a loving source, and a reflection of our truest nature. They may be seen as strict, even unbending - but never cruel.

Next time you find yourself in a painful situation, do not waste your valuable time feeling somehow judged by the universe, as though you were being punished for your past. Instead, welcome the consequence as a deeply wise and compassionate teacher, one that is showing you how to grow through recalibration and redirection of your energy and release of that which no longer serves. Remember, you are never alone, but always within a loving and wise whole.



Parvati Devi is the editor-in-chief of Parvati Magazine. In addition to being an internationally acclaimed Canadian singer, songwriter, producer and performer, she is a yoga teacher and holistic educator. Having studied yoga and meditation since 1987, Parvati developed her own yoga teaching style called YEM™ Yoga as Energy Medicine. Her current shows, "Yoga In the Nightclub" and "Natamba" bring forward a conscious energy into the pop mainstream. Her book "Confessions of a Former Yoga Junkie" is a road map to a revolutionary life makeover for sincere spiritual seekers.

For more information on Parvati, please visit www.parvati.tv.

ACTIVISM

For the Sincere Spiritual Seeker



Spiritual activism has become popular among today's yogis and conscious communities. But what does it mean for a sincere spiritual seeker? Since peacefulness arises from a state of non-attachment and unity, what is spiritual activism?

As we evolve spiritually, we cannot help but feel moved by the suffering we see in the world. An impulse to help alleviate pain is a natural reflection of our inherent humanity. Meditation often gives rise to a greater sense of how connected we are, and as such, that our compassionate actions serve the world. Compassion must be the foundation of spiritual activism. Through compassion, we rest in our underlying sense of oneness. We are humbly no better than or worse than others, but feel connected to all through love.

However, realized masters remind us that compassion is a sophisticated state of being. We can open our hearts to others' suffering and empathize. But true compassion, where "no-self" exists and only oneness presides, is a profound state that most of us experience less frequently than we may think. Our world is desperately hungry for more love and true compassion, so we work towards such. We simply must not mistake our good intentions for true compassion. We must make sure that we are not acting from ego when we are doing "good deeds".

The term "spiritual activist" feels like a slippery slope for a sincere spiritual seeker, one who is devoted to the cessation of all sense of "me" or ego. Though many spiritual traditions

around the world use the word “righteousness” to indicate the spark that calls a spiritual seeker to follow divine guidance, often such can fuel the ego. In radical cases, it can lead to extremist groups that justify their acts of violence as compassion in action.

The ego is a tricky thing and will find any window to slip through and express itself. We have all heard the popular aphorism, “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” Perhaps some so-called cases of spiritual activism are this: an aspect of the ego feeling a self-righteous and self-inflated sense of “me” who is doing “right” as opposed to the “wrong” “they” are doing “over there”. No love can come from such divided thinking.

Would a sincere spiritual aspirant attend a protest? Would the Buddha be beside him, protesting? I am not the Buddha, but my guess is that it is unlikely, as the very nature of a pro-

test is either for or against. I know from the protests I have been in that they tend to inflate or deflate the ego in some way. There is a subtle or powerful rush in feeling “I am doing good because...” And that thought is not far from “I am better than... because I am doing this.”

Some protesting activists are truly inspired, such as the famous Rosa Parks who refused in 1955 to move to the back of the bus because she was black. She was a fiercely courageous activist, yet not necessarily a peaceful spiritual seeker.

Would writing a letter to an MP be an action for a spiritual aspirant? It could be, if it were done in a spirit of compassion to highlight the way an action creates suffering, and without attachment to outcome. A yogi doing such would do as Lord Krishna instructs Arjuna in the Hindu holy text the Bhagavad Gita: be unattached to the fruits of his or her actions. True spiritual activism must

make non-duality, that is, the sense of unity, its first priority.

We do not want to hear about our attachment to “me” or the suffering it causes. But the sincere spiritual seeker knows that anything that inflates our ego (positively or negatively) leads us astray. When thinking about what to do in the face of suffering, we must ask ourselves if our actions in any way stem from feeling separate from the whole, or have any sense of aggression, finger pointing or ego stroking. If so, we are not acting in peace. When not in peace, we are disconnected in some way, somehow feeding our ego. And when there is ego, there is suffering.

Spiritual activism is something very few can truly do, because it can only arise when there is no ego. And when there is no ego, as the great saints show us, there is a more peaceful way. May we aspire to this.



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CONSEQUENCE

The Mighty Goddess of Love



In Vedic myths of Creation, the Supreme Consciousness, which is beyond experience, wished to experience itself. In consequence, this desire gave birth to the world of form as a means of experience.

The world of form is the visible form of the Supreme Reality, Shakti or the Goddess. She is the kinetic expression, the absolute vehicle of transformation, and the keeper and implementer of the laws of consequence.

Consequence is the first child of the Divine realm of all possibilities. She offers us an infinite treasure trove of gifts in evolution and reflection. It would be foolish to limit such great potential to its most common interpretation: a difficult effect as a result of a previous activity. There is so much more to experience from consequence, so much to be understood about the great Love of Creation from this single reality.

The universe exists because of consequence. Every action creates an action in which lives the consequence. Where you sit at this very moment is a consequence of a moment or moments that happened before. Consequence is the great Creative force of the Cosmos, the Delightful Beauty that is the vehicle of life, and through which we know ourselves and can merge our limited idea of who we are with the Cosmic Self.

Every action creates a result. You are living, breathing, tasting, seeing, smelling, and feeling that consequence right now. If you perceive the Great Delight of consequence, the Goddess of Love and Inspiration in that which manifests as your reality, then it will be possible for you to use the consequences of actions as the Guru principle. This principle is that which carries you from darkness to light and shows you the result of your choices, so you may see which open new

pathways and which keep you circling through the same patterns over and over again.

In awakening to the Goddess of Love as consequence, you celebrate her gifts. They are seen as the Celestial Chariot transporting you home to abide in the Self. When the result of action brings great challenge or seeming obstruction, it is wise to re-perceive the Great Delight's current manifestation as Her love and sweet guidance. The challenges are Her choice of vehicle as Her teaching. Feel the gentleness of Her presence, and listen to Her whispers of love as She dances with you - even if the consequence seems harsh on the surface.

Consequence is the Cosmic Dance with the Divine. Each step of the dancer compels a response from the partner, and calls them into deeper intimacy. Every life experience is a consequence of that which

has already been - be it a health issue, a relationship, your career, your parents, your birth country, your hair and skin colour, etc. Each of these is a result of action, thoughts or emotions previously imprinted. Consequence is the cosmic mirror through which you see your strengths and fears.

There is no need to assume that a challenging result is a negative consequence of action. A challenge could also be a gift for hard work done or an opportunity to release something old and binding. The most important thing is to feel Her presence guiding you. Let Her gift of consequence inspire you to take one more step towards freedom of Spirit.

Blessings to your Dance!
May Her undulating forms spin you and step you to a place of intimacy where the Great Love that is, is no longer deniable.



A gifted and highly skilled yoga teacher, intuitive, founder of Sananda Yoga and Art of Life Karmic Readings, **Ananda Shakti** embodies the spirit and energy of a life committed to wholeness and enlightenment. Since 1980, Xenia has devoted her life to the study, training, teaching and living of the timeless wisdoms of creation from ancient times to their new expressions in our modern psyche. She counts many of the great masters, both in India and North America as her mentors and guides.

For more information about Ananda Shakti, please visit www.sananda.ca

YOGA

BEGINNING

Every Moment

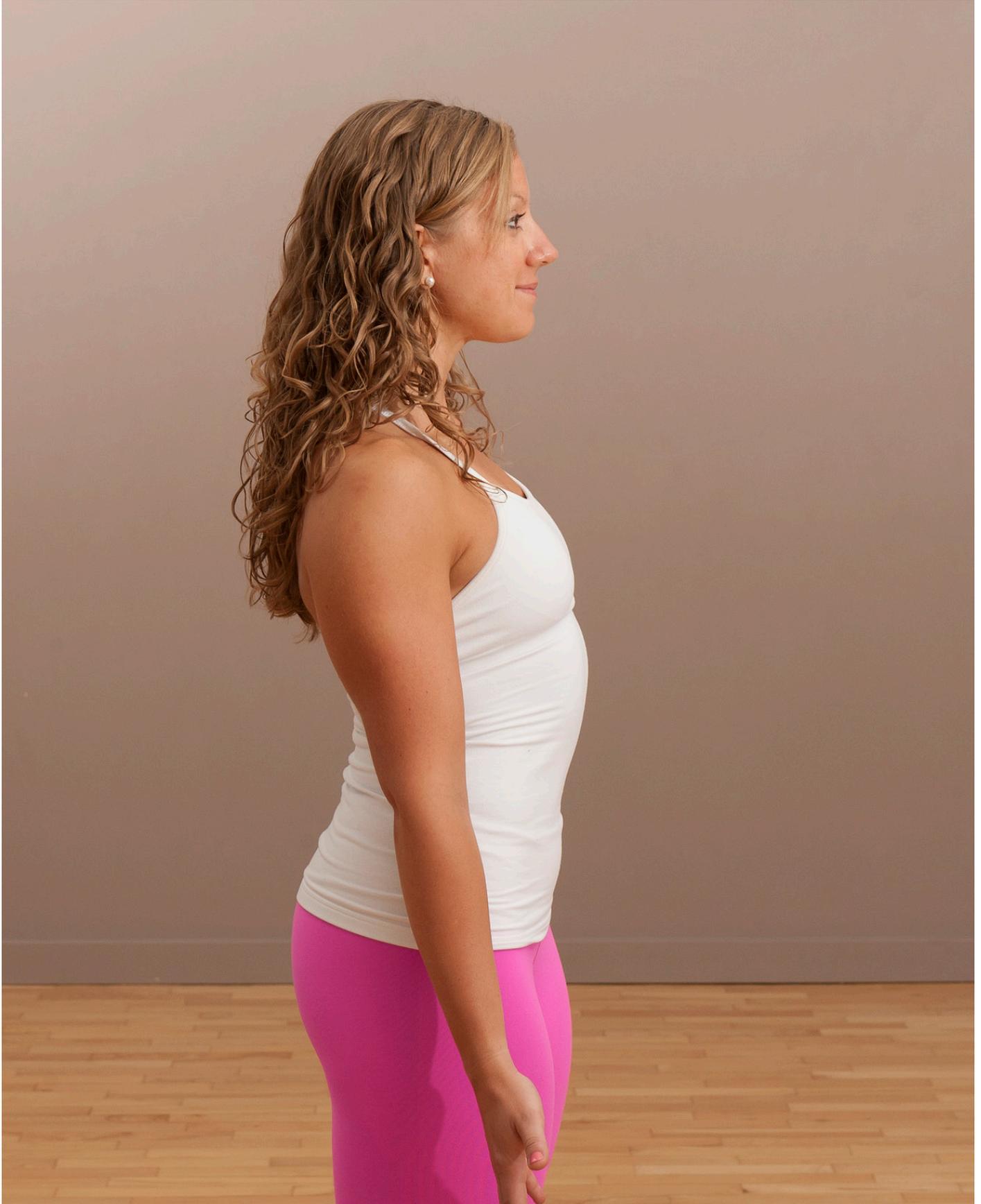


Image credit: GrowSoulBeautiful

Life is not so much about beginnings and endings as it is about going on and on and on.

It is about muddling through the middle.

- Anna Quindlen

Beginning a yoga practice is exciting, and every class brings something new to our awareness. As we progress in our practice, the excitement of newness can fade and be replaced with boredom or a sense of 'checking out'. Flows become habitual and alignment becomes automatic, so we may disconnect from the present moment and think about our never-ending To-Do list even as we breathe and move in rhythm.

A yoga practice is a quest for balance, and the building of a habit of practice is the same. Creating a habit of everyday practice has remarkable benefits for our mental and physical health, but having a yoga practice that becomes so habitual that we no longer need

to engage and think about it will lose its meaning and benefit, and become merely exercise.

Instead, how can we bring that sense of reverence that is present when we begin something new to every moment of our practice? This is the real work of yoga: being present allows us to see sparkle in every repetition of familiar movement, and constant exploration gives us the opportunity to find something new in every moment. Our body is not the same from moment to moment or day to day, and tuning in to whatever is currently happening in our body can allow us to become present in every breath.

Try this exercise: next time you come to your mat, start with a body scan. Instead of changing anything about your body intentionally, just notice where you are in the moment. Where are you holding onto tension? Where do you feel movement from your breath?

What feels open and relaxed? What is your emotional state? Is your mind racing in circles or is it focused?

In yoga class we often focus on intention and change, but we skip the step of beginning where we are. Without this awareness, we are holding a map and deciding on a destination without knowing where we stand in relation to it. Understanding where we are emotionally, mentally and physically allows us to establish a starting place that will be different every day. This makes our practice forever new, and we begin again every time we step on our mat.



In her 13 years of practice and 5 years of teaching, **Lisa Kitteringham** has integrated her love of dance and yoga to create flowing meditation sequences that allow each student to increase their body awareness and ground their practice in a steady rhythm of breath. She is inspired every day by the moments of discovery in the minds and bodies of her students and by the moments of stillness she experiences in her own **practice**.

For more information about Lisa, please visit www.groundedyogini.com

FOLLOW THE WAVE

In Your Spine



It would have been easy to feel sorry for myself when I became paralyzed from the waist down due to a spontaneous spinal cord injury. Yet, as I share in my Positive Possibilities article “Consequence: The Great Teacher”, and my Wellness article “Healed by the Great Blue Whale”, I know that there is nothing in life that is “against me”. All that happens supports my spiritual growth in some way.

As I stayed in the notion of possibility, I got out of the way of nature’s innate healing power. I started to notice small currents of life extending from the conglomerate of energy in the injured area, like shoots of grass arising from the soil. Little ripples of life started to wave down my legs. Eventually, I could feel my toes and start to wiggle them.

That wave began to pulse up my spine. I could then roll from side to side, and eventually onto my stomach. At no point was I able to do anything that was not in flow with that wave. If I pushed, the consequence was searing pain. The wave moved me into pressing up from my stomach, and then to crawling. I grew as though from an ocean molecule, to a sea creature, to a land animal, to an upright human. Finally I came to walk and dance again in joy. My recovery was deemed medically miraculous. I share more about this healing journey in my Wellness column in this month’s issue.

This wave exists within us all, at any given moment. It is the pulse of life itself. Yet because of our habits and the way we often choose to perceive life stressfully, we hold tension in our tissue, electrical and nervous systems. Over time, the juiciness of the wave, and the flow of energy in our body/being, become rigid, causing illness and distress.

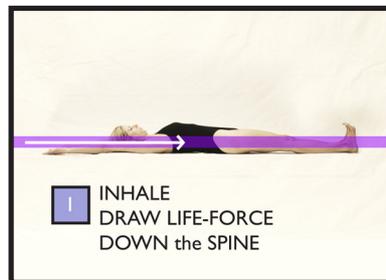
In the previous issue, I guided you through a full body relaxation. Today, I share a simple and safe exercise to help free up the energy in your spine, as though your spine were a tube of breath. This exercise will lead to the next, as we build towards reviving the natural wave in your spine over the course of a few exercises.

EXERCISE

1. Find a quiet and relaxed environment to lie on the floor. Use a towel or yoga mat if you like.
2. Gently cup the base of your skull with your hands, lift your head off the floor about an inch or so, and tilt your chin in slightly, so that your neck lengthens slightly.
3. With arms alongside your body and feet hip-width apart, begin a full body relaxation, bringing your breath awareness from the crown of your head through your body

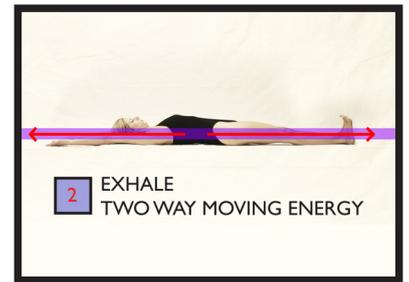
and down into your toes. Feel your whole body breathing. (See last month's article, Savasana, for full description.)

4. Once you feel connected to the ground and aware of your breath, lift your arms above your head as you inhale, and exhale as you rest them on the floor. Let your whole body feel long.



5. Then point your toes as you inhale. Breathe in through a whale spout in the crown of your head, through your spine and into your toes.
6. Exhale out that whale spout and out your feet as you press out your heels and stretch

your arms away from your feet.



7. Repeat the process: Inhale through your whale spout and spine, pointing your toes.
8. Exhale through the whale spout and soles of the feet as you press out your heels and stretch out your arms. Feel your spine lengthen.
9. When you have had enough, bring your breathing back to what feels more normal for you. Take a few more long breaths and enjoy.



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DIFFICULT EMOTIONS NO MORE

Four Questions to Free Yourself



I first started meditating in 2006 during my solo travels throughout Southeast Asia. At that point I had been practicing yoga for six years, was newly vegetarian, and felt that meditation was a practice that would lend itself easily to my new lifestyle. I soon found myself on a monastery in northern Thailand, all dressed in white, sleeping in an empty khuti (hut) with only blankets and a plastic patio chair as furniture, and a meditation schedule that had me practicing up to 15 hours (sometimes more) each day. After eight years, it is an understatement when I say meditation has changed my life in ways I could have never imagined.

Since then, I've more or less only practiced Vipassana Insight meditation, although I have dabbled in a few different approaches. My understanding thus far is that the teachings are based on the **Four Foundations of Mindfulness**, particularly the first two (mindfulness of the body and its senses, and mindfulness of feelings), with an emphasis on cultivating concentration.

Last year I traveled to Burma to practice with the revered Sayadaw U Tejaniya. The approach taught at his monastery, **Shwe Oo Min Forest Meditation Centre**, was also Vipas-

sana Insight, however, the focus was on cultivating wisdom instead of cultivating concentration by being mindful of our mental states (the third foundation of mindfulness). To do this, **Sayadaw U Tejaniya** encouraged us to ask ourselves constantly “What is the attitude of the mind right now?” and to observe, without judgement, what is there. If you do this, you might not notice much at first, but if you are persistent enough you will begin to notice that mind states such as aversion, greed, and delusion motivate almost all of our actions and reactions. When practicing in this way, the fourth foundation of mindfulness (mindfulness of the Dhamma) naturally arises, and understanding of the Dhamma and the nature of phenomena also arises, thus cultivating wisdom.

One of the valuable tools Sayadaw U Tejaniya shared deals with cultivating wisdom in the face of difficult emotions. It’s as simple as asking yourself

four questions – and answering honestly – to get to the root of things.

The four questions are:

1. *Is the difficult emotion pleasant or unpleasant?*
2. *What/who is making you feel this way?*
3. *What is really making you feel this way?*
4. *Is this emotion necessary?*

To paint a clearer picture, I’ll use the four questions in the same way I did during my trip to Burma. I’m a little bit of a worrier, and my partner and I often travel separately, usually meeting up at a pre-determined (usually exotic and unfamiliar) location. The whole time he is traveling to meet me, I worry that he’ll get hurt somehow, or worse yet, that his plane will crash. Telling myself things like flying is the safest way to travel doesn’t ease my anxiety, so this time around, I tried the four questions.

1. *Is it (the difficult emotion) pleasant or unpleasant?* Unpleasant.

2. *What/who is making you feel this way?* The possibility that something harmful may happen to him.

3. *What is really making you feel this way?* The thought that something harmful may happen to him. The THOUGHT!

4. *Is this emotion necessary?* No, especially since it just makes me anxious.

This process was a felt revelation for me. My fear in this case (and most likely all other cases) was the result of a thought. A fleeting, intangible, impermanent bubble of a thought! Seeing how much power and energy I gave to a thought, and choosing not to continue, was really freeing.

I often say, “Practice makes permanent.” Given that our actions are a result of our intentions and mental states, what kinds of heart/mind states do you want to make permanent?



Dawn Mauricio is a yoga and meditation teacher with a playful, dynamic, and centred approach. She is known for her boundless energy and smiling personality that are both contagious and motivating. Drawing from her deep experience in yoga and meditation, she delivers an effective balance of clear, precise instruction and mental reflection. Dawn firmly believes that how we offer ourselves in practice reflects how we offer ourselves in life, inspiring her to find new ways to extend her practice beyond the yoga mat and meditation cushion – and encouraging her students to do the same.

For more information about Dawn, please visit dawnmauricio.com.

YOU ARE THE WORLD

Our true nature is oneness with Nature. Aspects of our psyche that interfere with our true nature and our fullest health also interfere with the total health of our planet. We are literally interconnected in the seen realms through our biochemistry. We are literally interconnected through the unseen realms through thoughts, energy and intention.

As we move into the fullness of our being and release our attachments to the places within that keep us small, we allow our magnificence to shine. In so doing, we celebrate who we are and our oneness with this glorious planet, that supports us unconditionally.

Here is a meditation practice to help increase your awareness of this interconnection:

Sit quietly upright, in a place you feel safe being completely yourself. If you sit cross-legged on the floor, support your seat and legs with pillows as needed so that you feel comfortable. If you are on a chair, sit free from the back of the chair and rest your feet evenly along the ground.

Close your eyes. Begin following your breath. Notice the inhalations and exhalations move through your body. Watch your lungs rise and fall, the feeling of the air moving. If you have a mantra, breathe it through your body. Invite the breath/mantra into every cell of your being. Allow the energy of the breath and the power of the mantra to fill up every cell of your being. Do this for sometime, as though your being were inhaling/drinking the spiritual energy you are feeding it. Be in a place of relaxed receptivity, not effort. As your body/being willingly receives, allow the nourishment to take root.

1. Bring your attention to your root energy centre, through your sit bones and pelvic floor. Imagine, sense or visualize that this area is part of the Earth upon which you sit. Sense or visualize that your pelvic floor is made of moist earth, dark, thick and vital. From this earth sprouts life, like fresh, green grasses. Sense the earth and alive grasses within you. Feel



- the vitality in your pelvic floor. Feel the connection to the Earth.
2. From this foundation, notice flowers sprout from the soil with joy, ease and openness. Notice the colours and fragrances. Fill your sacrum with this fresh vitality, joy and ease.
 3. Watch this vital energy rise above the tops of the flowers, through your solar plexus, so that you see within you the trunks of trees, their strength, their vibrant, green leaves and how they rustle in the wind. Allow the solar plexus to feel fresh, alive and vibrant while maintaining your sense of rootedness in the Earth.
 4. Notice the tops of the trees, how they dance into the sky. Feel the freedom of the sky through your heart, the light, the expanse, the possibility. Feel this through your heart with joy, ease and delight.
 5. Above the sky is the dark night, where stars shine. In the twinkle of their light, there is wisdom, an eternal truth, beyond the ego/mind. Feel this light amidst the dark, starry dance like timeless wisdom through your throat area. Feel the effortless expansion there and simply be.
 6. Still rooted in the thick, moist soil through your pelvic floor, notice above the stars, in their blackened sky, the realm of permanent light, not subject to the changes of day and night, but that simply is. This field of pure consciousness flows through all. Feel this light open your mind through the third eye area in the centre of your head, where thoughts dissolve into expansive beingness. Be with this light of possibility.
 7. While anchored in the thick, vibrant Earth, notice the top of your head, your crown area and how, through it all, is oneness, interconnection. Be with this oneness for sometime, while being aware of your seat. Stay in your body.
 8. In this fullness, watch your whole body/being be the entire universe, everything that is. You are the world. Your body is like a mountain, still, vast, eternal, rooted in the soil and open to the heavens. Feel the timelessness of your being in the perfection of the now. Allow every cell to resonate in the eternal truths of your infinite being. Rest in the fullness of who you are.

After some time, bring movement slowly back to your body. Take a few long breaths and open your eyes.



Parvati Devi is the editor-in-chief of Parvati Magazine. In addition to being an internationally acclaimed Canadian singer, songwriter, producer and performer, she is a yoga teacher and holistic educator. Having studied yoga and meditation since 1987, Parvati developed her own yoga teaching style called YEM™ Yoga as Energy Medicine. Her current shows, "YIN: Yoga In the Nightclub" and "Natamba" bring forward a conscious energy into the pop mainstream. Her book "Confessions of a Former Yoga Junkie" is a road map to a revolutionary life makeover for sincere spiritual seekers.

For more information on Parvati, please visit www.parvati.tv.

THE CONSEQUENCE of Convenience



Many of us live in societies where we are sold on the culture of convenience, anything we want at any time. Much of this is driven by our hardwired human desire to have things we think we need for survival, but convenience is not about survival, it is all about consumerism, and the consequence is waste. It has become evident that the choices we make for convenience and consumerism are having profound consequences on our environments and on our own health and wellness. Everything produced has an ecological impact, from the beginnings of its life - the energy and resources used to produce and sell it - to the end of its life where it is likely to end up as waste. These processes are increasingly putting pressure on our natural environments.

Single use plastics are a fundamental problem for the health and wellness of many ecosystems and an example of the consequence of our culture of convenience and consumerism. Cheap to produce, these plastics breakdown easily into tiny particles when

exposed to the elements, and absorb toxic chemicals along the way. One way or another, plastics in solid form and as broken down particles, end up in marine environments. About 80% of all waste in the oceans is plastic. Researchers have found that although some plastics sink most breakdown into these tiny particles and are consumed by fish and other forms of marine life from plankton to turtles to whales. So now plastic is in the food chain, coming back full circle and potentially causing harm to human health through the consumption of seafood.

Harmful chemicals present in plastics such as bisphenol A (BPA) and phthalates are toxic to wildlife and the environment and now researchers have linked high exposure of these chemicals to cardiovascular disease and associated conditions such as obesity and hypertension. These chemical are already known endocrine

disrupters playing havoc with the endocrine system particularly in young children and are believed to damage the male reproductive system. Although BPA is banned in some products like plastic refillable drink bottles, it is still prevalent in many plastic products, and continues to harm wildlife, the environment and us.

However, there are simple solutions we can all practice that do make a difference to keep harmful plastics out of the environment and these chemicals out of our bodies.

- Use a refillable water bottle and carry reusable cutlery
- Say no to all plastic bags, plastic straws and plastic coffee cup lids
- Use skin and personal care products made of natural ingredients, without harmful chemicals or microbeads (plastic scrubs)
- Always recycle and reuse where possible and never burn plastics

- Encourage others to do the same

These simple yet mindful changes in consumption can be a catalyst to motivate us to do even more. Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment. Mindfulness stimulates motivation and can be a truly effective practice when applied to consumption. For instance, when you are shopping next, take a moment to be fully present to ask, "Do I really need this?"

As we begin to understand the consequences of our consumption and consumerism we can use mindfulness to make conscious consumption choices. We can be the change that will have positive consequences for the environment, for society and ultimately for our own wellness. We conclude with the words of the Buddha: "My actions are my only true belongings."



Angie Bucu is a wellness researcher and freelance writer, and tutors university students in the art of mind-body wellness therapies. She is currently working on a study that looks at teachers' views of teaching mindfulness in schools for the first time; she writes regularly for various publications; and she has a blog dedicated to sharing knowledge and research on wellness, with a focus toward mind-body, environmental and nutritional wellness.

For more information about Angie, please visit [Ingredients of Wellness](#)

HEALED BY THE GREAT BLUE WHALE



In the fall of 2010, I travelled to the North Pole and gave the northernmost musical performance, to help raise awareness of the melting polar ice. I was guided to go by an important shamanic dream: I lay motionless on the frozen polar ocean, beneath which a great blue whale was waiting for me.

When I arrived in Canada's most northern village, two Inuit elders greeted me, saying they had known I was coming – the whale had told them. I understood then that I was part of something much greater than me. The elders recounted the Inuit story of the sea goddess Sedna whose home is on the ocean floor and whose body became the whales, seals and walruses.

At the top of the world, I sang my songs, and facilitated shamanic healing work for the planet, while Sanskrit names of the Goddess were chanted. I quietly prayed, "Mother, I know you are suffering. If I can help alleviate your burden in some way, let me know."

Six months later, on March 11, 2011, before I learned that a tsunami had devastated Japan, I woke up in my Toronto home paralyzed from the waist down and in searing pain. I was brought to hospital where doctors insisted I had been hit by a car - yet no impact had taken place. Due to a damaged spinal cord, I was given a 50-50 chance of walking again after necessary spinal surgery.

Intuitively, I felt that my connection to the planet was at the heart of this mysterious injury. Instinctively, I felt that my relationship with her would heal it. Instead of surgery, I chose to dive deeply within and trust the blue whale that had called me to the North. I drew my attention to the subtle realms of Nature and the Cosmic Intelligence with which I had worked

to develop YEM: Yoga as Energy Medicine and my musical creations.

I would remain immobilized in bed for over three months, unable to get up even for the most basic things. What followed was a rearranging of everything I knew, a “karma fast forward”. I was challenged to let go of that which no longer served and learn to absolutely trust a higher power for everything. When you realize that you may never walk again or do the simplest things we take for granted, your ego dies and something else is born.

I saw my body as floating molecules held together by my perceptions and karmas. The injured area was a energy mass that appeared fixed due to my beliefs. As I opened to absolute possibility, I got out of the way of nature's innate healing power.

I dove psychically inward and traveled down my spine. At its base, I saw the

blue whale with nearly no heartbeat. I watched it and my area of injury with presence. As the whale's heartbeat grew stronger, I witnessed little ripples of life-force wave down my legs. Eventually, I could feel and wiggle my toes.

Over months, a blue orb grew to envelop me from my feet eventually to my head, as the energy wave flowed up my spine. I was becoming the whale. As the blue light and wave grew stronger, I could roll from side to side, then onto my stomach. As I said in this month's YEM article, there was no point where I was able to do anything that was not in the wave's flow. If I pushed, the consequence was searing pain.

Following the wave, I learned to push myself up from my tummy, from which the impulse to crawl arose. I had grown from ocean creature, to a land animal onto all fours. Four months later, I emerged onto my feet and had to learn how to

walk again – this time over a whole new axis.

My recovery was considered medically miraculous. Once ambulatory, I went into my studio and out poured a collection of songs in profound gratitude. This body of work has just taken shape into a multidimensional healing sound bath, an album to be released in the spring of 2015.

The blue whale continues to be a powerful presence in my life. It inspired my trip to the Arctic, the amazing Inuit elders I met, the spinal injury and healing that followed, the musical album, and my new show. Most recently, it sparked the creation of Parvati.org, a not-for-profit organization that aims to stop the seismic bombing planned for this spring in Canada's Arctic Oceans and protect our planet for generations to come.



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WHAT MATTERS Is Now



Today, I invite you to make a conscious decision to improve your overall health, release negative mind patterns, improve the quality of food you eat, and/or decide to be more consistent in showing up to work out. There are many avenues to do this. Here are a few ideas to improve overall health:

1. Stop eating fast food.
2. Make and eat more meals at home.
3. Drink more water.

4. Reduce your sugar intake.
5. Eat more veggies, and alkaline foods.
6. Start a daily meditation practise. Breathe deeper with purpose.
7. Start hanging around positive and uplifting people who share your goals and outlooks.
8. Commit to working out a minimum of four days per week. Do anything that gets your heart pumping and your body to sweat.
9. Laugh at yourself more. Life is not meant to be so serious.
10. Notice thoughts that make you feel anything but good. Don't make them right or wrong. Just witness. And then make a choice to think better thoughts. Thoughts that allow you to feel lighter, calmer, happier. You don't need to fix anything right now. The work is in feeling happier, no matter what is

happening around you. If you want more crap to show up in your life, continue to put out stressful, fearful energy.

11. Start being easier on yourself. You are a work in progress. You never arrive. It is a journey. Enjoy the ups and downs of the ride.
12. Always have your workout clothes with you. That way, if you are running late or an opportunity appears that you didn't plan on, you have no excuse not to get sweating. This will add up over a lifetime.
13. Spend at least five minutes daily reading books or watching videos that make you feel good. One of my favorites is watching Abraham Hicks videos. You can find a ton of them on YouTube.

Whatever you have done, or haven't done, up to now, doesn't matter. What matters is your desire to make changes

going forward as of now.

No matter how many times you have missed a workout, eaten poorly or had an emotional breakdown, right now, you can choose to do better, and make more focused decisions that support your overall goals. It is as simple as that. The natural consequence of not being focused, or not committing to moving forward, will keep you stuck exactly where you are. I invite you to expand. Drop your fears, your doubts and move forward bravely, courageously into new territory! You have got this.



Sandra O'Brien is mother to the world's three most fabulous children. She is also a Law of Attraction Life Coach, Personal Trainer, yoga instructor, published author and Reiki healer. Her work has been featured on CityLine Television, and The Toronto Star. She is owner of Muskoka Hot Yoga, and Muskoka Goddess, offering hot yoga, tabata bootcamps, personal training and coaching. She created the Goddess Creation system, a female fitness program to blowtorch body fat, sculpt sexy lean muscle and empower women everywhere to be the best version of themselves, inside and out. She enjoys dancing, reading, hiking in the forest, meditation.

For more information on Sandra, please visit www.muskokahotyoga.com.

STARTING OUT

Sustainable



Another new year is here, with its invitations to make big changes in our lives. Fitness memberships are one of those things people buy in their New Year's resolutions, with great intentions that rarely seem to stick. As a long-time gym-goer, I see the crowds swell, the classes fill and the cardio machines in constant use beginning around New Year's Day. By the end of January, though, the crowds have thinned out.

Who benefits from this state of affairs? The gyms certainly do - they're getting long-term money for short-term use. What of the people who made resolutions that aren't sticking? They remain in the same shape and a few dollars poorer, guiltily themselves about the expensive outfits or gear gathering dust in the closet, likely feeling unhappy or even ashamed that, yet again, they have not kept up with the change they meant to make.

Albert Einstein is often quoted as saying, "You can't solve a problem with the same mindset that created it." This is true with fitness as it is of anything else. If you habitually skip the

gym, overeat, stay up late, and feel lousy about yourself, a gym membership is not going to change that - no matter how many extras you buy like a personal trainer, or exhortations you put on yourself like "don't screw it up this time!".

Pursuing any fitness activity with a feeling of dread, shame or aversion is creating an experience of self-punishment that sets you up for failure. Stress - and that includes self-punishment - boosts the body's cortisol levels, which trigger it to store more fat around the abdomen. Self-love and self-compassion are part of shedding the weight of negative thoughts, which then allows us to naturally release physical weight as well.

Healthy, balanced and permanent changes can start small. Perhaps today you go out for a walk around the block. No big deal, no changing your clothes or buying a bunch of fancy running

gear, just go walk around the block. Tomorrow, go for a longer walk. This weekend, treat yourself to a walk in nature. Start to get your heart pumping. Feel the fierce vitality of exertion that is within your healthy range. Go to some gentle yoga classes that help you to feel grounded and connected in your body. Then, maybe you will want to start riding a bike, or jogging a little, or going to the pool, or taking a dance class, or hitting up the squat rack at the gym. But you build up to it - not only in terms of your fitness, but in terms of making it a sustainable habit. You don't go from 0 to 60. (There's a reason the gradual build of "Couch to 5k" is a popular program for people taking up running, and "Couch to Marathon" is not.)

Similarly, you make changes in your diet incrementally. Maybe you cut back the mochas from daily to three times a week to weekly

to monthly. Maybe you add more green veggies to your meals and slowly scale back the refined carbs. Maybe you move back your evening eating so you do not normally eat after 9pm, then 8:30, then 8, then 7:30. You never set yourself up for feelings of starvation or deprivation by making drastic changes in your intake. At each stage, you allow yourself to integrate the change into your life so that it feels healthy and realistic, before you make further changes. Create conditions for your success.

Above all, thank your body for bringing you this far. It is not your enemy but your friend and partner. Thank yourself for the practice of self-compassion as you make positive, sustainable, healthy changes. Enjoy the gift of this year as an opportunity for self-love and increased vitality through movement.



Pranada Devi is a communications professional living in Toronto, Canada. She is the Managing Editor of Parvati Magazine, and serves as an advisor on marketing communications for Parvati's various projects. In between times, she enjoys being active at the gym, on her bike, in the pool and on the running trail. She was competitive as a teenager in distance running, badminton and ringette. 20 years later she built her running back up from scratch and has finished races up to and including the marathon.

THE CONSEQUENCE of Conscious Consumption



Buddha said, “My actions are my only true belongings: I cannot escape their consequences. My actions are the ground on which I stand.”

When people use the word consequence it usually implies an action or inaction with a negative outcome. Most of our actions involve getting something we want or think, we need. Based on the fact that that we are bombarded with messages to buy, buy, buy for almost fifteen hours every day, we are not a culture that acts like we spend much time considering the consequences of our actions.

Where Do You Buy Your Food

Most of us don't spend much time considering the impact of our food purchasing choices, but if more of us did, the beneficial consequences could be transformational. A 2007 Cornell University Study showed the average person makes around fifteen food related decisions a day. On a basic level we're focused on finding foods to satisfy our hunger that are fast and easy to get. We don't give much thought to the broader consequences of the food we eat.

What if we began shifting to the positive outcomes within our reach by making some small changes to way we shop for and think about food?

Where you source your food is probably one of the most important places to begin making a shift toward conscious consumption. You can begin generating positive consequences by considering the impact of what you are buying on not only your own health, but also on

the local economy, your community's resources and the planet.

Here are five questions to ask yourself before you buy:

1. *Does the food product I am buying actually serve my body's need for sustenance and health? Or, is it actually a fake food, junk food or processed food?*
2. *What are the long-term consequences of eating this food on my health? Is it grown without chemicals (organic); wild caught, lovingly pasture raised?*
3. *What is the impact on the people who grew or made this food? Could they have been exploited? Is this item sustainable; is it fair trade?*
4. *Will this purchase help support the local economy? If not, could you get something made/grown by a local business instead?*

5. *Could I make or grow this myself?*

Consequences and Connection

The beneficial consequences of becoming more conscious consumers on the environment, local economy and our health are tremendous. But beyond these immediate impacts, something even more powerful starts to happen to us as a society.

One of the most profound consequences of shifting to conscious consumption is that we reconnect with the people who made the product. This affords us an opportunity to get a genuine understanding about the craft and care that was taken with that product. We come to respect the effort it took another person to make this product so we can enjoy it. It's impossible not to experience profound, personal satisfaction by growing or making something yourself. When I eat

an organic tomato I grow myself or bake a crustless quiche made from organic, CSA-sourced eggs in my hand-thrown quiche pan, the food just tastes better. As a consequence I savor every bite. I feel more connected to Mother Earth. Both my body and spirit receive nourishment from the full circle I experience of farm to table.

Our Actions Are Our Only True Belongings

As we shift to conscious consumption our outlook on life changes. Our health improves. We learn to respect the gifts that Mother Nature provides. We learn to appreciate the talents and creativity of others. Our collective consciousness expands, and as a consequence of our actions, the world becomes a bit more connected.

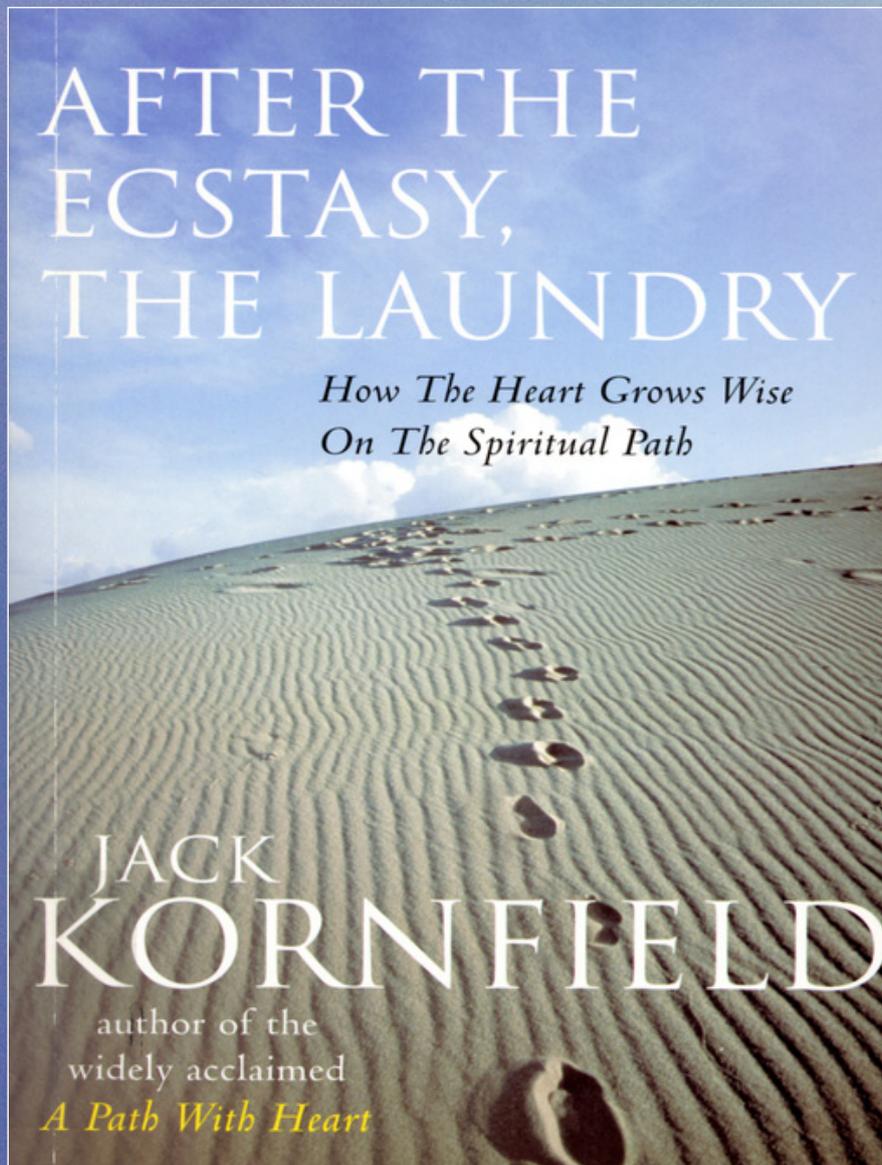


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For more information about Anne and to receive her Free Health Resource Guide, please visit www.nourishholisticnutrition.com.

AFTER THE ECSTASY

The Laundry



Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield may be best known for his book “A Path With Heart: A Guide to the Perils and Promises of Spiritual Life”. But you might not know that eight years after “A Path With Heart” he published a book called “After The Ecstasy, The Laundry: How The Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path” that merits a place on the bookshelf of any devoted spiritual seeker - or, indeed, of anyone who has had an opening experience and has discovered that life doesn’t just become blissful after the first “a-ha!” moment.

Those who have been on the path for a while, or who have had the grace to be around spiritual masters, or had a near death experience, or who simply were in the right place at

the right time, may well experience a moment (or many moments) where the usual mind falls away and what remains is bliss, love and increased understanding of the meaning of one's life. At first, it may seem as though the whole world is luminous and everything is simple. Yet, all too soon, we may feel that state ebbing from our consciousness as our habitual mind creeps back in and we seem to be just the same old person we were, in the same old life. How do we go on, knowing that we have touched something real and great, yet we continue to live our habits? This frustration can lead to anger, despair, fixating on trying to recreate the magical moment, denial of our current state, and more.

What Jack Kornfield skillfully and compassionately does in "After The Ecstasy, The Laundry" is help us to make peace with the fact that even after a peak experience, a satori, a glimpse of en-

lightenment, our work is still right here in our day-to-day lives, in our human bodies, in our families, in our communities. A peak experience doesn't mean, for example, that we get to bypass the jealous feelings we have in a relationship, or an anxiety around authority figures. We still need to keep coming back day after day to the work of simply being aware and open in this moment, touching the roots of that jealousy or anxiety and not running away from it. And no amount of spiritual bliss justifies us closing our eyes to inappropriate behavior or giving away our power.

I first bought this book in 2001 when it was published, but did not get as much from it then as I do now. In 2001 I had yet to meet my spiritual teacher, let alone confront the challenges of re-entering my messy life after glimpses of divine bliss or satori experiences awakened in her presence. And even when

I did start experiencing those challenges, I desperately wanted to bypass all the roiling mess I was beginning to sense in myself and stay in the bliss bubble. It would be years before I was willing to truly consider that I was not being present and that I could choose to just show up for my day to day life - that doing this was at least as spiritually powerful as blissing out.

As Kornfield points out, blissful experiences may come and go, and it's just one more thing to let go of. Through "After the Ecstasy, The Laundry", he creates a safe place for us to just keep moving forward, day by day, with the cooking and cleaning and driving and banking and everything else that seems so unsacred yet - in truth - is just exactly the spiritual ground we need to grow.



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FILM

BOYHOOD



Normally when long periods of time pass over the course of a movie, actors are made up to look younger or older, or are replaced by younger or older players as needed. The film itself is shot over the course of weeks, perhaps months for a more involved production. But the film "Boyhood" sets all of that practice on its ear, taking the daring approach of shooting a film over the course of several years and allowing actors to naturally grow and age. We see the story of Mason (Ellar Coltrane) who grows from a six-year-old boy to a eighteen-year old by the end of the film. His mother (Patricia Arquette) goes through her own journey as a single mom, through college and two remarriages to an established career as a pro-

fessor in her own right and a less fraught relationship with Mason Senior (Ethan Hawke), yet comes to the end of raising her children and finds a sense of emptiness and disillusion at how fast her life has gone by. Mason Senior also goes on his own journey as a part-time dad, playing in a band, working low-end jobs, but finally settling down into a new marriage and steady work.

In yearly vignettes, Mason goes through the ups and downs of boyhood from riding his bike to the upheaval of moving and changing schools, being disciplined by step-parents, finding his own self-expression, developing a disciplined work ethic and navigating through relationships. We first see him as a child looking up at the sky, then getting into his mother's car. By the end, he drives off to college in his own truck and the final scene is of him in Big Bend National Park, contemplating the sky and the moment.

Anyone who's been involved in the production of even a short film or video knows that there is inevitable risk of cast or crew suddenly becoming unavailable due to unexpected events. For director Richard Linklater to quietly carry out a film production over twelve years and trust that he and his cast would be there every year, well and able, was a gamble that paid off. Similarly, the actors knew they were committing to something long-term regardless of how their lives or careers would evolve over twelve years. (Linklater even apparently told Hawke that he would have to finish the film if Linklater died before it was complete.) The kind of work done in "Boyhood" is a leap of faith by all involved in the production. Thankfully, it has paid off, appearing on several critics' lists as the best film of 2014 and winning or being nominated for several awards including Golden Globe and Critics Choice. At time of publication, the 2015 Oscar nominations

have not yet been made public, but "Boyhood"'s nominations under Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor (Hawke), Best Supporting Actress (Arquette) and Best Film Editing seem all but a foregone conclusion.

"Boyhood" is particularly engaging because every period displayed in the film is not contrived. The actors are really the age they are, not aged or made to look younger, and current events are really current. Each scene is set in, and true to, the era in which it is filmed. As Mason says at the end of the movie, "It's always right now." As such, there is a richness to the twelve-year journey that could never be matched by a shorter-term project. It's understandably rare that such projects will be carried out, but cinema as a whole is richer for the work of "Boyhood".



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FILM

TRACKS

MIA WASIKOWSKA ADAM DRIVER

TRACKS

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF 'THE KING'S SPEECH'

LEAVE EVERYTHING BEHIND



To watch the movie "Tracks" is to find yourself immersed in a stunning, far-reaching rhythmic display of widescreen images that move from desolate arid landscapes, merciless red rock, parched, desiccated earth and seemingly infinite sands, into the delicious and succulent body of the ocean.

With the film's powerful cinematography, viewers lose themselves in the midst of the timeless desert landscape of sprawling endurance, to then find themselves again amidst the rich intimacy of a close-up of a ragged skirt hem, brushed by calloused feet in weather-worn sandals that drudgingly walk alongside the persevering hooves of camels. This powerful play of contrasts, expanse and constriction, beautifully mirrors the inner struggle that the protagonist faces alone on her epic journey.

Based on the 1977 true story of Robyn Davidson (Mia Wasikowska), *Tracks* is a cinematic film that beautifully and powerfully recounts one 27-year-old woman's courageous 1,700-mile journey by foot across the unforgiving Australian desert with four camels and a black dog named Diggity. Director John Curran (*We Don't Live Here Anymore*, *The Painted Veil*) works with Marion Nelson's focused script of minimal dialogue to capture the intensity of Robyn's sense of isolation, her mistrust of people, the profound relationship she has with her environment, and the intensity of a psychologically transformative journey.

Seemingly unaware of the true motivation for her journey other than the desire to be alone, Robyn works for years learning to train the feral camels that will be her tie to survival amidst an inhospitable yet sacred landscape. Thanks to Curran's fine directorial work, the viewer is intimately aware that

she seeks to start anew and somehow be born again through the grueling walkabout, so that she can eventually feel unencumbered by the weight of her traumatic past. The journey is one of a grieving soul, seeking to return to wholeness and find her place in the world anew.

Her journey is almost entirely solitary, but she is occasionally accompanied by an aboriginal elder, Mr. Eddy (Rolley Mintuma), who walks with her through sacred aboriginal land. Every six weeks, her sponsor's American photographer, Rick Smolan (Adam Driver) from the National Geographic, visits her and takes pictures. Sporadic tourists also seek to take pictures of the elusive and misunderstood "Camel Lady".

I watched the movie with my jaw dropped at the totality of the experience. The masterful editing moved rhythmically, almost hypnotically, from one scene to the next.

The poetic visual pacing was beautifully mirrored by the outstanding addition of Garth Stevenson's soundtrack. His choice of subtle, moody and emotional instrumentation adds a perfect balance of anticipation and suspense, and a sense of expansive reverie, to the lush visuals. You can sense Stevenson's innate appreciation for nature, nourished in the green landscapes of his native British Columbia.

Audiences are left mesmerized by the vast landscape, stunning cinematography and the intimate, gritty and graceful performance by Wasikowska (*Alice in Wonderland*, *Jane Eyre*, *Stoker*).

This movie is for anyone who loves nature, believes in the transformation of the soul, and delights in the human spirit – or for anyone who simply loves an outstanding cinematic experience.

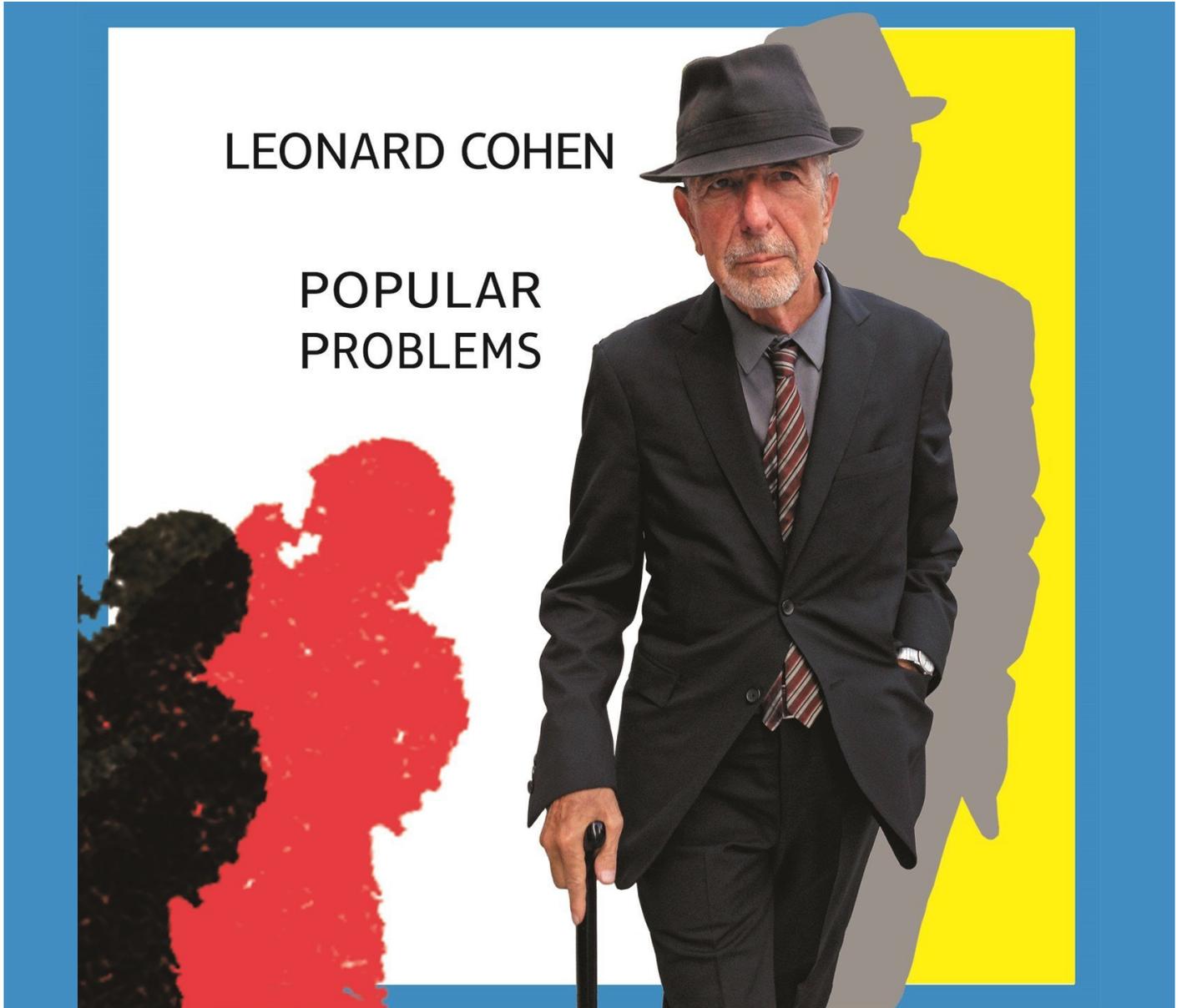


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LEONARD COHEN

Popular Problems



I grew up playing in Montreal streets that echoed with the creative voices of great Canadian artists such as Mordecai Richler and Leonard Cohen. Such memories have left me with a soft spot for Leonard Cohen's music, whose smoky voice, simple melodies and profound lyrics have marked the chapters of my life.

Yet saying that his most recent album "Popular Problems" is among his best ever is an unbiased opinion. There is good reason that Leonard Cohen's 13th studio album hit number one in 29 countries around the globe this year shortly after it was released on September 22, 2014, two days after his 80th birthday.

True to the artistic career that he has painted in words and sound since his musical debut in 1967, "Popular Problems" displays a mastery of poetry, imagery and melodies as

only a seasoned craftsman could create. Cohen touches upon tender emotional topics with delicacy, poise and wisdom. His expression seems to effortlessly seep into the recesses of the listener's creative inner world, carrying with it a sense of relief, familiarity, recognition and inspiration. He manages to do what few can: relish and savour all the shades of grey that exist within our vast emotional landscape and human experience, welcoming it all, adoring none. He seems at once immersed in the fullness of living and a witness to its cornucopia unfolding. Tinged with regret, introspection, derision, reverence and joy, the range of songs move from bluesy grit to angelic elation and funky edginess. With Yoko Ono's recent return to stage at the age of 81 and now Leonard Cohen's at 80, these octogenarians demonstrate that the time for artistic voicing is very much alive and vibrant as long as the creative spark still burns brightly within.

Age has brought forward a new Louis Armstrong meets Tom Waits feel to Cohen's classic deep vocals. Some songs on "Popular Problems" are reminiscent of his vintage material, such as "Chelsea Hotel" or "Famous Blue Raincoat", that are like gate posts along the path to his musical success, while other songs explore a new sonic landscape. But all of the content on "Popular Problems" offers a simple clarity that is truly refreshing in today's music arena where songs often ping-pong between the over-produced and the under-considered.

Patrick Leonard (Madonna, Elton John, Roger Waters, Bryan Ferry) is producer and co-writer on all but one song. He seems to understand and honour the potency of Cohen's lyrics by keeping them at the front of the respectful melodies, harmonies and instrumentation that serve Cohen's presence. The album is very well crafted, yet with all its simple brilliance, historic honouring

and refreshing departures, I wish at times that Leonard's voice would sit into the mix just a bit more. That alone would add another layer of mellowing and make one appreciate this album's mastery even more fully.

Overall, Patrick is an excellent compliment to Cohen's creative voice. He adds just the right amount of production juice and creative twists when needed, such as the beautiful addition of Donna De Lory's Arabic chant for peace in "Nevermind" that keep songs feeling fresh and innovative.

There is no doubt that Leonard Cohen's "Popular Problems" will rest comfortably alongside his other great works and will leave die-hard fans truly satisfied and new ones intrigued for more from this fine musical artist.



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MUSIC

LANA SUGARMAN
Invocation

Lana Sugarman
Invocation



Lana Sugarman is a Toronto-based yoga teacher and kirtan singer who recently released her debut album, *Invocation*. After many years of leading her own kirtans as well as sitting in to support fellow kirtan artists including David Newman, Brenda McMorrow and Swaha to name a few, the time finally came for her to make her mark in the genre with her own offering. I'm thoroughly enchanted with Lana Sugarman's *Invocation*—a collection of mantras put to music.

I saw and heard Lana for the first time at Bhakti Fest West 2014, as she supported many of the main stage performers with background and response vocals. My ears quickly honed in on her melodious voice during Brenda McMorrow's set, and as it ended I made my way backstage where she graciously handed me her CD.

As the founder and programmer for Bliss Bubble Radio, I listen to a lot of

kirtan-chant-mantra music... a lot. I love the genre and the artists in it, but I'm rarely bewitched by any one artist's album. This one got me. As I listened to it for my station's rotation, I found that it made me smile—inwardly and outwardly. This girl has got a little extra magic in her musical mantra mojo. Her vocal tone is rich and soothing. Each track has been flawlessly produced by Chris Gartner and totally supports and enhances Lana's music, making it shine.

Invocation has earned a coveted spot in my car's CD player. After several months, it's still there creating my perfect little bliss bubble as I travel here and there around busy Los Angeles. While I LOVE the whole offering (Have I mentioned yet that I love this girl's music?), stand-out tracks for me are the sweet and playful "Hey Ma Durga", the pop-infused "Satyam Jnanam Anandam Brahma" with its upbeat groove, and the final "Closing Prayer"

for its clean and reverent simplicity. I literally could not get those first two tracks out of my head for days as they are so catchy. Whether you play the album in its entirety or pick and choose a few tracks to create the perfect meditation or yoga class mix, add her music into your life. Divinely inspired, divinely created and divinely offered, Sugarman's *Invocation* is the perfect music to set a heart-opening and transformative tone for your new year. Get it. Play it. Share it. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.



Leanne Wood is a new age spiritual music industry insider with ten years of experience managing one of the top bands in the genre, Larisa Stow & Shakti Tribe. In addition, Leanne organized and co-facilitated numerous domestic and international group retreats on behalf of the band in California, Bali and Italy. Leanne was the founding director of the non-profit project, Shakti Tribe Foundation. She facilitated and co-designed peace programs that taught mantra, yoga and positive transformational tools to those in prisons, jails, halfway houses and juvenile detention centers. Leanne also co-founded **SacredSoundsRadio.com**, the world's first radio station and website devoted to the "Yoga for your Ears" genre.

THE EMPOWERMENT PLAN



One person in every 42 people in the city of Detroit is homeless. Shelters are often overcrowded, overwhelmed and under-supported to provide support for every person in need. Too often those in need of even basic necessities, such as food and shelter, have to fend for themselves on the streets. This is reality for over 20,000 Detroiters who have become trapped in the cycle of homelessness.

Detroit's automotive industry was ground zero for the economic downturn, with a terrible toll in jobs lost and homes foreclosed. The social safety net is tattered and stretched beyond its limits. Those who manage to get a slot in a shelter can only stay for two years, often not long enough to rebuild their lives and get a stable home, so they may end up back out on the streets.

Michigan winters are brutally cold. All members of Parvati Magazine's editorial board have walked through Detroit in December and felt the biting chill. Being out there with no choice in the matter, no home and no place to warm up, is life-threatening, but this is what Detroit's homeless population faces every winter.

Veronika Scott, a design student at Detroit's College for Creative Studies, felt moved to do something about the situation. If she could not resolve homelessness, she could

at least help to provide some much-needed warmth. As a class project, she designed the "Element S", a waterproof, self-heated coat that transforms into a sleeping bag. She worked in a homeless shelter and consulted with homeless people to ensure the product met their needs. When her semester ended, she realized she did not want to stop, so she has continued under the name The Empowerment Plan.

The Empowerment Plan now employs homeless women, feeding and housing them, and teaching them sewing and business skills, to construct the Element S locally. It is given out for free to those who are living on the streets.

Scott recently told Fast Company, "I continued the project not just because I was passionate about it but because actual people needed, wanted, and desired it. I realized I had to take it to the next level and make it a system."

Imre Molnar, a dean at the College for Creative Studies, told the New York Times in 2012 that "Veronika's garment has great international ramifications. Her coat could be used by refugees or for disaster relief operations." He added that the Red Cross has shown interest in the item.

It's exciting and inspiring to see designers who see a need and take action to help others, both in the product and in the production chain. In this way, fashion designers and entrepreneurs can benefit the world with their creativity.



By **Parvati Magazine** staff

THE EFFECTS of Estrogen



I don't know if there is something in the water but many of my clients, colleagues and team have been asking a lot of questions about hormones lately. I think it's important to talk about hormones because while most of us understand how important they are and how much they influence every action within our bodies, we know little about their nature or how to balance them. So today I will be talking about a hormone that is very dear to me: estrogen. I, myself, have high estrogen which makes my menses very irregular (did I really just admit that?).

Estrogen has a lot of sex appeal because it is what makes women women. Estrogen is also the hormone that decreases dramatically when we go through menopause so it is often connected to youthfulness. This drop in estrogen has been said to accelerate signs of aging in our skin and has spurred much fuss about how we can artificially sustain it.

But while the idea that estrogen is connected to youthfulness is a very popular view amongst beautologists, I think it's very interesting to note that estrogen is actually responsible for breaking down collagen in our skin. Confused? Well, as estrogen breaks down collagen, it also enhances the hyaluronic acid in our skin (hyaluronic acid helps our skin hold water and promotes a smooth texture). This release in hyaluronic acid could be why so many of us believe that estrogen is the source of youth when, in fact, collagen is prob-

ably the most important player in keeping our skin plump, moist and young. Estrogen, on the other hand, is something that needs to be balanced and controlled.

Not only does estrogen break down collagen, it also contributes to cellulite as it breaks down the strength of our cellular walls, making way for lumpy, bumpy fat. You will see many cellulite-reducing body products focussing on increasing collagen so our fat cells can retain a firmer structure. Furthermore, estrogen dominance will result in water-retention, further contributing to cellulite. This can also answer why some women have cellulite despite being slim and fit as well as why many women taking the birth control pill are predisposed to it.

So what do we do? Eating estrogen-friendly: Start with avoiding estrogenic foods such as soy and hops (what beer is made out of – and also

why men who drink too much of it can develop enlarged breasts). If we choose to eat animal protein, we should only consume organic meats which are devoid of disruptive hormones. We should also start eating more estrogen-decreasing foods like citrus fruits, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, avocados and nuts. Paying attention to our digestion is important as well, because if digestion is impaired, our hormone filtration will be weakened too. This is interesting as Pitta governs digestion, and I find many estrogen-dominant clients also have Pitta imbalances.

Balancing self-care: Topically, we should avoid chemicals that mimic estrogen in our skin care. Numerous chemical sun-screening agents as well as chemical preservatives imbalance our hormone levels as we absorb them into our bloodstream. This is why we are such sticklers about natural, mineral sunblocks despite

their powdery texture and white-ish hue.

Another topical treatment I have done is use prescribed progesterone cream to limit estrogen production. Again, this demonstrates how deeply what we put on our bodies affects us. But while the cream did regulate my cycle, I still think of hormone creams as a band-aid solution (though a very useful band-aid).

Clear the mind: This may be the most important factor and the hardest one for me. Relax. High estrogen tends to occur in high-stress people (Pitta) and also contributes to more stress as it is usually coupled with low progesterone – the hormone that helps regulate anxiety and stress levels. Invest in a good RMT. Remember, it's not self-indulgence; it's for your hormonal health.



Kristen Ma is the co-owner of Pure + Simple Inc., a group of Holistic Spas with its own line of Natural Skincare and Mineral Make-up. She is an Ayurvedic Practitioner who has studied in Canada, the United States and India. She is also a Certified Esthetician with eight years of practical experience, having worked in Canada as well as Australia. Most recently, Kristen has authored "Beauty: Pure + Simple" which was published by Mc Arthur and Company. Kristen has written on the subject of Holistic Beauty for Vitality Magazine, Blink and Jasmine. She is also a regular contributor to B Magazine, Tonic and Sweat Equity Magazine.

SEISMIC TESTING in the Arctic Ocean



The Arctic needs your help!

As I mentioned in the Letter from the Editor, when I recently learned that the Canadian government has given clearance for oil companies to bomb the seabed of the Arctic Ocean to test for oil deposits, I felt profoundly shaken in the depth of my being. Having traveled to the North Pole to raise awareness of the quickly melting polar ice caps in the fall of 2010, I feel deeply connected to the ocean there, its inhabitants and the people who live in the Arctic. In response to the news, I could sense the Great Blue Whale totem animal, that drew me on that polar journey and that guided the powerful healing that followed, echoing through me with a resounding NO! I knew immediately that the sonic effect of these blasts would kill the magnificent whales and sea creatures.

Before the oceans were permeated with ship traffic noise, the sounds emitted by whales were heard as far as four thousand miles away. On a particularly quiet day, tones would

only have become inaudible after thirteen thousand miles – more than the diameter of the Earth.

We cannot even begin to understand the subtlety of such communication – nor the harm we do on a day-to-day basis through travel, shipping, ocean exploitations, the boom of jet planes, the emission of wireless signals... and now it is ok to bomb the ocean bed? We are talking about sounds reaching 258 dB - a decibel level almost double what you would experience standing under a jet as it took off - reverberating through the ocean. What living being could sustain such sonic blasts – let alone beings that communicate via sonar?

As my friends and I combed through articles and groups about the issue, we found disturbing behavior on the part of the oil companies and the National Energy Board, the regulating body that according to its own website should be re-

sponsible for “enforc[ing] the orders, rules and regulations that are in place to protect Canadians, their communities and their environment.” Key affidavits about the potential harm of these blasts were being struck. The Board made the exceptional application to revisit its own ruling to allow the testing to go through. Local communities and Greenpeace have organized since 2010 to say NO to the testing, have brought legal challenges and raised the concern even at the United Nations. But none of this has stopped the National Energy Board or oil companies from proceeding.

Allowing seismic testing and offshore drilling in the Arctic shows a tremendous lack of insight into, and subsequent respect for, our ecosystem and our essential interconnection with nature. It also shows profound lack of foresight. What we do today creates our tomorrow. May we make choices now that always con-

sider the good of all. This is the true bottom line.

Greed is a virus that kills – not only animals, but us as a human race – because we are all connected. Any activity that harms nature harms us and is anti-life as a whole and as such is not an option. If we as a society feel the need to harm nature and the animals to access oil, it is a sign that it is time to seek alternate energy sources to fuel our economy.

The government of Canada has a handful of marine protected areas in the Arctic, but they are hopelessly tiny in the face of the vast areas being kept open to exploitation by big oil companies.

In the next article, I will share more about the goals of parvati.org in light of this concerning news. Meanwhile, if you have not yet signed these petitions, please do so:

SumofUs / SaveTheArctic



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PROTECTING THE ARCTIC OCEAN

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Industry Canada</p> |  <p>Industrie Canada</p> |
| <p>Certificate of Incorporation Certificat de constitution <i>Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act</i> <i>Loi canadienne sur les organisations à but non lucratif</i></p> <p>Parvati</p> <hr/> <p>Corporate name / Dénomination de l'organisation</p> <p>██████████</p> <hr/> <p>Corporation number / Numéro de l'organisation</p> | |
| <p>I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above-named corporation, the articles of incorporation of which are attached, is incorporated under the <i>Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act</i>.</p> | <p>JE CERTIFIE que l'organisation susmentionnée, dont les statuts constitutifs sont joints, est constituée en vertu de la <i>Loi canadienne sur les organisations à but non lucratif</i>.</p> |

The global ecological crisis is a wake-up call for us all. It is not only a call to act with greater compassionate understanding of how interconnected we are. It is an opportunity for each one of us to wake up to the magnificence of our true nature, which is love. A collective is only as strong as its individuals. If we want to change our environment, we need to transform ourselves.

The planet is a complex living organism with wisdom and compassion beyond what we can understand. It continually responds to the energy we put out and we respond to it. Our planet reflects our collective state of global consciousness and how we collectively treat each other, our environment and ourselves. At this time, many people are driven by fear and greed, living with short-term desires to get rather than give and serve. Most of us are taught to look out for “me”, rather than think about and care for “we”.

Most of us do not know or care how our food gets to our table or how it was grown. We don't know the tailor or cobblers that made our clothes and shoes. We can buy mangos in January in Canada that have traveled thousands of miles, at the cost of gallons of fossil fuels and emitting pounds of greenhouse gases. We have lost touch with the impact of our actions on our environment. What we think, feel and do affects all beings, everywhere, including

the planet herself. We feel we can control, outsmart, out-do Nature. And Nature cries louder than ever to be heard: I am here.

What about global food shortages, floods, droughts, and hurricanes? Like a person with a raging fever to shake off an invasive virus, so too, the planet is feverish, trying to shake off the weight we put on her: the physical toxins we emit in the air, water and food, and the etheric toxins we emit in selfish actions and distorted thoughts.

We tend to live disconnected from the whole, thinking somehow we will find the love we seek by wanting more. Yet we are already love. We are already loved. Our mother is calling us to stop, make amends, practice humility, listen to one another and listen to the still, small voice within. When will we reconnect with the beauty we already are, but have forgotten? We are her children. We come from her. We sustain her

as she sustains us. We go back to her. She is the mother we all share.

Nature's agitation is not separate from our own. We cannot walk away from it and pretend it is not happening, just as we would not walk away from a person in distress. Yet like participants in a global hit and run, we outpour toxins onto our mother, and keep on going, expecting no consequence for our actions.

We are being called to a new kind of action, one that understands that our wealth is global health because we are all connected. Every cell of your body is born on the Earth. She not only runs through your veins, she is the very stuff of which our veins are made. By resting in this undeniable unity, compassion calls us to wise action. As a child of the Earth, as a steward of the land, do you hear the call to give voice in communion with Nature to help protect the life that sustains all?

Whether you feel the impulse to open an organic café, apologize to someone, turn your company 100% green, work lovingly with people you judged as bad, tithe your income to protect wildlife, plant trees, save our water systems - whatever it is - that voice is waiting to be heard by you. That voice is Her call, reminding you that you are not alone. We are One Earth Family.

In response to the call, we founded the not-for-profit company parvati.org. Our mandate is "Supporting a healthy environment and healthy people so that we have a healthy world". We are looking for research volunteers to support the success of our first campaign for the newly founded not-for-profit organization www.parvati.org to stop seismic bombing in the Arctic Ocean by big oil companies. Please contact parvati@parvati.org if you feel interested.



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THE WEB OF OIL



Nepotism - transactions and hiring decisions based in favouritism - is very common in business. While nepotism itself is not illegal, it is certainly problematic. As this article will reveal, it is a major complicating factor in the potential seismic bombing of the Arctic seabed.

According to the magazine World Finance, 50% of all global transactions now occur between related parties. This has led to tax authorities worldwide tightening the rules governing transfer pricing to ensure that international business is done at fair market value.

The arm's length principle addresses the potential of deals being made between parties where there are biased relationships, such as within a family, between those who have shared interest, or when one party is controlled by the other. For example, a father may sell property to his son, but at a price below the true value of the property. This would not be an arm's length transaction, and the property taxes paid on the sale would be artificially low.

Turning a blind eye to transactions that do not respect the arm's length principle can enable questionable business practices that bypass competition and create opportunities only available to an elite few. Left unchecked, it feeds an inequitable system as documented in Velcrow Ripper's film "Occupy Love", which highlights how 99% of the wealth in the United States is owned by 1% of the population. It allows mega-corporations to get away with profiteering agendas that may benefit few while harming the whole.

This is shown all too starkly in the rush to exploit all possible oil reserves on the planet. As the Arctic ice shelves continue to collapse and the once impenetrable polar ice continues to melt, new areas of our earth become exposed for potential mining. Practices such as fracking, oil drilling and seismic bombing to gain access to Earth's natural resources are not benign and have an impact on our sustainable future. Yet, companies choose to go ahead with these practices and exploit the earth for profit without considering the ramifications of their actions. Businesses must be accountable to a force greater than the drive for profit, if their activities have the potential to leave the world worse off than before they came along.

The first mission of the recently founded not-for-profit parvati.org is to stop the proposed bombing of the Arctic seabed by big oil consortiums. Volunteers with this or-

ganization have been researching the companies involved and have discovered that there seem to be suspicious connections between government and businesses, between board members of certain companies, that suggests nepotism.

For example, the company Petroleum Geo Services (PGS), is connected with Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC). This company has just signed a memorandum of understanding with Greg Rickford, Canada's minister of natural resources - the very minister who oversees the National Energy Board, which is granting permission to PGS and other companies to carry out seismic testing in the Arctic seabed over the objections of all the local communities and concerned scientists. This is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg, and research is ongoing.

Some of the companies tied to the top of the

supply chain seem not to want to be identified at all. Some company names on the legal applications for permission to carry out this seismic testing have no web presence, and little can be found out about them.

This interconnection and secretiveness is not in keeping with the arm's length principle and is ethically just as questionable as having board members of cancer research foundations being major tobacco stakeholders.

I am sure this will not be the first or last article you will read about big oil and its insatiable feeding on the planet's resources at the cost of our future. I hope this article is the start towards bringing to light all those individuals and companies who seek to remain hidden as they engage in nepotism and environmentally destructive behaviors that have an impact on all of us.



Since 1994, **Rishi Deva**, founder and CEO of RishiVision and entrepreneurial coach, has empowered thousands of businesses. Rishi has an MBA in marketing and entrepreneurial studies and a BBA in accounting. He has spent nearly twenty years coaching, consulting, managing and supporting thousands of businesses from new startups to active global leaders.

For more information on Rishi, please visit www.rishivision.com.

WHY START A NOT-FOR-PROFIT



For years, the Canadian musical artist Parvati has been operating with social and environmental conscience. Her creative work has been inspired by activist initiatives such as her North Pole journey to raise awareness of the melting polar ice, her tsunami peace prayer, a reforestation campaign, and ongoing support for the international charity Embracing the World.

In response to the proposed spring 2015 seismic bombing by big oil companies in the Arctic Ocean, Parvati and a group of similarly dedicated friends worked collectively to create www.parvati.org. They decided to name this new activist company Parvati, not after any one individual, but in reference to the meaning of the name: an awakened Earth. Last week, parvati.org received official incorporation status as a not-for-profit organization.

Why create a not-for-profit organization? What is the difference between a not for profit and a for profit company? The primary difference between a not-for-profit and a for profit organization is that a for profit business focuses on financial gain, while not-for-profits focus primarily on serving their community.

Often, social, environmental and activist organizations are not-for-profit. Since shareholders invest for the purpose of gaining profit in the form of dividends, shareholders are few and far between in the not-for-profit sector. Instead, not-for-profits need to be much more creative in how they generate income to operate. This type of investment usually comes in the form of grants, bursaries and donations.

The typical corporate attitude is best described by Yale economist Robert Shiller who is

quoted as saying, "One problem with philanthropy is that it's unrewarding: You give away the money, and that's it." While I do not agree, his quote is appropriate to understand the key difference between the for profit and the not-for-profit business models. Shiller's argument does not hold true for people and organizations who feel that serving one's soul voice and/or serving others is the greatest reward.

The best example of service to the soul voice can be seen in the arts industry. Not focused solely on profit, it needs public and private funding to balance the disproportionate work-to-income expenditure. Almost everyone in the arts puts in thousands of unpaid hours, yet would not trade their experience for a high-paying corporate job.

Where Shiller's argument may hold some merit is that many not-for-profits run with inefficiencies not

normally found in the corporate for profit sectors. It was not until I studied the international charitable organization "Embracing The World" that I saw how not-for-profits can run with greater efficacy and efficiency than most Fortune 500 companies. Through the support of volunteers and with a phenomenal leader at the helm, Embracing The World sets yearly targets. Every year, not only do they meet their goals, they exceed them.

This kind of efficiency is possible for not-for-profits, when there is clear intention, 100% accountability and willingness to serve a defined need. Such is the intention of parvati.org. It has a clear focus on driving social change and restoring ecological balance through mobilizing activities that serve a long-term vision: ensuring that we leave this planet better than we inherited it.

Parvati.org was born through a collective of stewards who know

that we do not own this planet, but share it. We have an unwritten contract and responsibility to leave this world a better place than when we came to it.

Parvati.org's first mandate is to stop the proposed Arctic seabed bombing by big oil companies. Its medium term goal is to bring about an international marine sanctuary in the Arctic such that the waters and its inhabitants are respected and protected from the interference of shipping, fracking or drilling.

Whether or not you decide to work as a not-for-profit or for-profit company, you have the opportunity to act in service to your soul voice and the greater good. May clarity and effectiveness be watchwords for you as you create abundance that benefits all.



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OnWord

Thank you for reading the December 2014/January 2015 edition of **PARVATI MAGAZINE**.

Consequences - whether sweet or bitter - are gifts of grace from a compassionate universe helping us to grow and release old karmas and tendencies. When we soberly understand the consequences of our thoughts, words and actions, we naturally make choices that do not create harm.

As such, consequence becomes a springboard to a new beginning. Like an addict hitting bottom, we become ready to do things differently from how we have done, because we finally understand through consequence that the old habits will just never work for us.

The consequence of the seismic bombing of the Arctic Ocean seabed is that innocent sea creatures die, seafloor societies are disrupted, and our ocean's health, that is central to the health of humanity, continues to weaken. We must find a new way forward to fuel our economy, beyond fossil fuels. This begins by saying "no" to the old ways we know don't work.

If you would like to help stop seismic bombing in the Arctic Ocean, please join our group of volunteers who are working for parvati.org. Specifically, we are looking for those willing to do research on the companies involved and for people who can support marketing our campaigns. If interested, please email me personally at parvati@parvati.org.

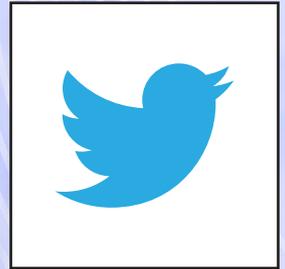
In sober and humble beginnings, we can touch the infinite potential and grace of this moment and activate in service to the highest good of all. May it be so for you in 2015.

Love yourself.
Love others.
Love our world.
Parvati



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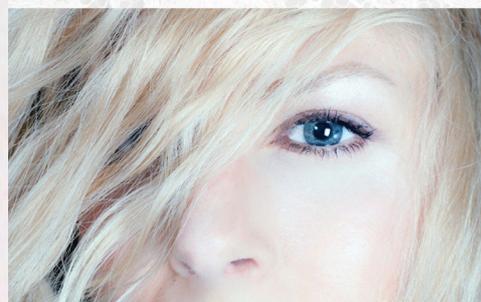
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