

POSITIVE ENERGY

# HOW TO LIVE A COMPASSIONATE LIFE



B.K. DR SARAH EAGGER

To live compassionately is to direct the flow of our energy to support and care for both, others and ourselves. We are nurturing and loving, as well as protective and strong. I describe this as the “yin and yang” of compassion and self-compassion.

The challenging times we are living through call on many of us — especially healthcare workers — to draw deeply from our inner reserves. We need a special wisdom and sense of perspective, and a method to prepare ourselves, to face daily challenges.

As a consultant psychiatrist and Chair of the Janki Foundation for Spirituality in Healthcare, I have long understood that healthcare professionals especially need these capabilities.

At the Janki Foundation, we have developed an app — Happidote — to support them. It provides tools, such as short meditations, to help users stabilise and prepare to face difficult situations by taking brief periods of time to withdraw into peace and silence, and recharge.

Our empathy for people who are suffering demonstrates sensitivity to, and feeling for, others; but as we resonate with their pain, we risk being caught up in a draining emotion that can affect us negatively.

By contrast, compassion is a positive energy that uplifts and helps others to come out of their suffering. Brain scans show that when we practise being compassionate, letting the energy of this feeling flow from ourselves, we are engaging a different part of the brain from that involved in feeling empathy.

Self-compassion is essential to our well-being. It is the same energy that we can give others when they are suffering, but directed inwards to nurture and comfort, provide protection and



build strength for ourselves. When faced with others' suffering, it may guide us to set limits as to what we can do for them, and to work through our own feelings of fear and pain.

Learning how to turn love and compassion inwards also helps to calm the “inner critic”. This internal voice can trigger the same neurophysiological responses as external stress factors. The more we create a habit of self-criticism, the more we add to the risk of developing physical signs of stress, including high blood pressure and ulcers.

Meditation guides us to observe and understand our inner conversation — the tone of voice, the words we choose, and the energy with which we respond to our pain.

While we can learn to alter our thought patterns through cognitive behavioural therapy, the way to transform them is by meditating deeply.

It is a way to recognise our thoughts and feelings, without denying or suppressing them. Observing in silence, creating a distance from what is going on in my mind, I decide which thoughts to let go, and which to pursue. The more I practise, the deeper I can go, tracking back to a place of safety and peace.

I understand that I am a soul with everything I need within, connected with the Supreme Soul, an energy I come to

know, love and recognise is always there to help me in my life. I am peaceful, loving, powerful and clear — this is the real me.

*Dr Sarah Eagger, a long-time practitioner of Rajyoga, is Chair of the Janki Foundation and a retired consultant psychiatrist formerly at Imperial College, London. Her book, Stillness in the Storm - 7 tools for coping with fear and uncertainty, was published recently.*

DISCOURSE

# PRACTISING SILENCE BRINGS UNTOLD BENEFITS



DADI JANKI

There is a part of you that is perfect and pure. It is untouched by the less than perfect characteristics you have acquired by living in a less than perfect world. It is filled with divine qualities, so it is in a constant state of resourcefulness and well-being. Its total absence of conflict and negativity of any sort makes this part of you a still point — a deep, enriching experience of silence.

Make time to practise reaching this inner place of silence. It will bring you untold benefit. First, it allows you to manage your thoughts better. You will find, for example, that there is no need to think as much as

you do; that simply sitting in silence will bring out, effortlessly, much of all that you need.

Second, the experience of silence releases you from the grip of your negative programming and conditioning. You will more easily experience the truth of your inner peace and dignity. This further aids the mind in remaining focused and capable.

Third, the power of silence can be shared. As you increase your experience of silence, your power can help those without power to continue in their efforts of self-development and the experience of peace. Your stock of silence plus an additional stock of true, powerful thoughts will help others go beyond the limited into the unlimited and the divine.

It feels so good to ‘go beyond’ in this way; to leave behind thought and speech and become quiet for a little while. It is so refreshing and nourishing; it is habit-forming. Love for spiritual introversion, solitude and silence complements our life in such a beautiful way.



SOUL POWER

# THE POWER TO STEP BACK BRINGS CLARITY



GOPI PATEL

Thoughts are the power of the soul. Within each thought there is a feeling that drives that thought and this creates the mental attitude in life. When we begin to access the power of our virtues and qualities, we are empowering our thoughts with a higher quality of energy, so our impact is greater, and the expenditure of energy is less.

I am often asked: “How do I take my power back?” The power to take a step back is very relevant for the answer to this question. To take a

step back means to stand apart and regain perspective from the inside out. To recalibrate and find a position to maintain to be able to manage what is happening.

Sometimes we ‘withdraw’ in this way because we cannot bear the situation anymore. We feel unable to face what we actually have to, and need to, face. We often find ourselves involved in things that waste our time and energy.

We may be caught up in situations of stress and difficulty where there are a lot of emotions from others or even within ourselves. If we overreact in these situations over and over again, we begin to feel powerless.

We may be involved in overly dependent relationships where someone is possessive of us, and our time and energy, and we feel drained of power; where we



find ourselves constantly trying to please someone, but nothing we do is ever sufficient. There is the overwhelming feeling that we will only be happy when we finally make that one happy. But, in fact, that one is never happy with whatever we do.

There is a beautiful analogy for the power to take a step back, or withdraw, and it is that of the tortoise. It has the ability to withdraw all its limbs away from any present danger or threat. In the same way, we can withdraw all our fearful and worried thoughts and take them within, and from that place, fill the consciousness with the deep and natural quality of peace.

To develop this power, we need to spend time generating peaceful thoughts and, in meditation, connect to the ocean of peace, the Supreme Parent, who, like a Mother, will gently calm our fears

and our racing thoughts.

In this way, even though we still have to do what we have to do, and fulfil our responsibilities, we can do these things from a feeling of safety. We can cultivate the art of being a detached observer of what is happening around us and within us; we can observe the thought patterns and dynamics inside and then exert this power of peace over all we can observe.

The power of peace, behind the power to take a step back and observe, brings real power to manage our lives in such a wonderful way that there develops a great sense of well-being, and this in turn affects not only the self, but also those around us. Gopi Patel is a spiritual educator and senior Rajyogi meditator with the Brahma Kumaris, specialising in spiritual pragmatism in all areas of life.

GOOD LIFE

# FOR QUICK PROGRESS, STOP WASTE AND REDUCE YOUR ‘WEIGHT’



B.K. DR. SAVITA

Why is it that those following the same principles, with the same goal of self-improvement, achieve different levels of success?

There are two main reasons for this: they waste their resources, and they carry surplus ‘weight’.

Just as excess body weight leads to physical illness, a soul that is heavy develops spiritual illness. An unhealthy diet harms one’s health;

similarly, when the mind consumes stale things, that is, things of the past which one need not think about, it has a deleterious effect on the soul.

Seeing the defects of others, thinking and gossiping about them, is akin to consuming rotten food.

If we like fries, they tempt us a great deal, and we eat them against our conscious wish, knowing very well that they are not good for our health, they will do harm. Similarly, listening to and sharing gossip is damaging - it fosters dislike among people. We may find it interesting, even entertaining, but it can cause others great sorrow.



When the intellect consumes such things, we put on weight, that is, the mind becomes heavy. Just as someone who is overweight cannot run or climb, one with a heavy mind cannot go ahead fast, spiritually.

Overweight people also have to stop every so often as they move along, and they need support from others. In the same way, we become tired of working on the self, and are unable to overcome the obstacles that come on the

way. We also depend on others to make progress. Forgetting that the Almighty offers the best support, we turn to others for help, and if that is not received, we are unable to continue.

To lose physical weight, one needs to ex-

ercise. The same is true on the spiritual path, where we have to exercise the soul. The best way to do that is meditation. If we meditate for a few minutes from time to time during the day, we will stay light; our heaviness will disappear. Our confidence and enthusiasm will increase and we will begin to move forward fast. We will no longer need anyone’s assistance, as we will constantly experience God’s support.

Apart from exercising and being careful with our diet — no unnecessary or negative thoughts or talk — we have to ensure that we do not waste anything.

How do we waste things? When we do not

recognise the real value of something, we squander it. Not using time in a worthwhile way is to waste it. If we have resources and we do not use them or let others benefit from them, that too amounts to waste.

Knowledge, good wishes, and pure feelings are all resources that enrich the self and others, and when not used, they go to waste. The result is that we do not progress as fast as we could have.

Once we stop the waste and reduce our weight, we will forge ahead.

*B.K. Dr. Savita is a senior Rajyoga teacher at the Brahma Kumaris headquarters in Abu Road, Rajasthan.*

## A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Simplicity is a clean, white background upon which a splash of colour can be seen. When I maintain a clean, uncomplicated state of mind, I am more able to see beauty. Turning my attention away from overthinking, I discover a simple, clean space inside myself. This white space is the screen of consciousness that exists behind the thoughts and feelings projected onto it. By focusing on the screen, not the thoughts, I create simplicity. Today let me maintain a clean state of mind and enjoy splashes of beauty.