

Question: What was your first experience of yoga?

Answer: I had taken a class in Eastern religions in college, but had not experienced yoga until I was thirty. It was not easy to find a yoga teacher in those days. A few days after going to my first class I was surprised to find that my body felt ten years younger. My flexibility and sense of ease was so increased that I became committed to practicing yoga regularly and soon began to take teachers training in yoga.

Question: Who do you consider as your guru?

Answer: I was initiated as a Swami, by Swami Rama on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh India. He often said, the guru is within you. He encouraged me to listen to inner guidance rather than depending on someone else. In my workshop on the chakras we will explore how we tend to idolize another and follow him/her indiscriminately eventually becoming disappointed in our ideal. We will explore how to discriminate between what is of real value in enlightening us, and what falsely promises but does not deliver what we expect. We will discover that the Guru is everywhere, that every experience shows us the way if we are open to it.

Question: What tradition of yoga do you practice and why?

Answer: for many years I practiced raja yoga with an emphasis on improving myself, making myself better in order to reach enlightenment. But enlightenment always seemed to be in the future, somewhere ahead of me like the proverbial carrot on a stick. After many years of this I was led to the practice of self-inquiry, asking, "Who am I?", "What is this?", asking in a way that is not mental, but open to revelation. In this exploration one is transformed from a seeker to a finder.

Question: What was the thing that yoga gave you that nothing else could?

Answer: this question has an underlying assumption that yoga is a special, unique, or superior. A better question might be, "What does life give you that nothing else could?" I would answer, that life gives you every opportunity.

Question: Where do you see the bridge between Western and Eastern philosophy?

Answer: Over the past several hundred years most of Western philosophy has been based on discoveries in the physical sciences. Until the beginning of the twentieth century the scope these sciences was limited to a materialistic view of reality, which greatly influenced Western philosophy. As physics evolves from a mechanistic Newtonian worldview to a holistic understanding of the phenomenal universe, in which self-organizing abounds, it is providing a foundation for Westerners to recognize that consciousness is the substratum and basis of material phenomenon rather than the other way around.

Question: how would you describe the method of yoga psychology? Why do you think it is important to create this method?

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Answer: Just as there are many schools of Western psychology that greatly differ from one another, there are many different approaches to yoga psychology. Some include methods that attempt to transform a person's mind, actions, and attitude. Other yoga psychologies do not involve any methods at all. Using methods on one another, including those of yoga psychology, creates a stilted disconnected way of being. I am more interested in uncovering the way that each of us is being methodical in our lives. Embodied awareness of how we are attempt to manipulate ourselves as it is occurring, emancipates us from the encumbrance of all methodology. This is called liberation.

Question: Could you describe how it actually works – what do you and/or your students do during a session/workshop (e.g. asana, pranayama, meditation, therapy etc.)?

Answer: In a workshop we may practice asana or pranayama. These create a more sattvic way of being but this is ancillary to the real work of self-discovery, which occurs through experiential inquiry. Experiential-inquiry involves a shift from focusing on the content of experience for example, *what* I am thinking or seeing, to discovering how I am being in this very moment. Experiential-inquiry is all about discovery or revelation.

If I am distressed or worried rather than focusing on what I'm distressed or worried about and trying to change the that situation, I can become aware of being worried or distressed regardless of what it's about. Worry our distress, whatever the content, comes from some sort of insecurity, lack of safety, more fundamentally, a sense of being cut off from unconditional love.

Most of us are on a quest, seeking after what is apparently missing; however we conceive it. That is what motivates almost all behavior and emotions in contemporary society. It is also why most people on a spiritual path are referred to as "spiritual seekers." The solution to this sense of lack is never found by trying to obtain what we assume is missing. As long as you are distracted in seeking after what you believe to be lacking you will never be able to discover what is already here. What seems to be missing is already present and the very source of your existence. You have simply been ignoring it in you preoccupation with lack. So I would say that the core or essence of all therapy or spiritual unfolding (which are one and the same) is turning toward and discovering or recognizing what already is. It is this turning that is the basis of my work in therapy, in a workshop, in meeting anyone in any circumstance, as well as meeting myself.

Question: What is the value of understanding chakras, their functions and effects?

Answer: Becoming familiar with the functions and effects of the chakras is very valuable in the process of inquiry into our common human experiences. The chakras reveal the fundamental archetypal motivations and dramas of human existence throughout all times and cultures. In our workshop we will explore each of our unique ways of experiencing each particular archetype: psychologically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We will discover how we become taken over

by particular enactments that cause conflict and suffering, and how to transcend the dilemmas and travail that arises at each chakra.

Question: what do you think the main goal of life is today? How can someone reach it?

Answer: We can see in this very question how much we are oriented toward reaching goals. The question could have been, "should we have goals in life." But we usually would not think to ask that. It is assumed that life is best lived through striving toward the attainment of goals. What would it be like to have no goals? We assume that one would be aimless, floundering, and unfulfilled. Is that really so? What would it be like to inquire into the goals that you have already set up for yourself according to your ideals. Maybe it's the goal of being a good person, of being loving or attaining spiritual enlightenment. How do your goals affect your acceptance of yourself? How do they affect your judgment of yourself? In what ways are they limiting and how do they enhance your life? What would you be like without these particular goals? If I were to tell you that the main goal of life is to be loving or to be honest, how would that affect you? Would it help? Or would you begin judging yourself for ways in which you lack these qualities? What is it like to be always reaching?