Opening Reflection on Happiness

And if you had looked at me from the outside, you would have said, this girl has everything. We're given this happiness equation in this culture that says, if want happiness, If you want success, You need this type of education, This type degree, look this way, get invited to these parties, vacation in the resort, etc.

And then you'll be happy. I had those things. And then I went off to Stanford University and things don't bring happiness. Money and titles and degrees and vacations and clothes and et cetera, et cetera.

Guess what? They don' bring hapiness. That whole thing is a complete myth. This is Doctor Talks. We are going to have an amazing next hour together, but Before we begin, let's just enter the conscious field of presence and love and blessing by taking some conscious breaths together.

So settle yourself in your seat, feel the breath flowing in and out of your body. Let's come. fully into the present moment, letting all the preoccupations of the day fall away, just being fully here in this glorious field of connection and universal love.

And then as we return to the present moment, feeling our bodies, felling our breath, feel the community of support we experience here.

Welcome and Presence Practice

In consciousness, in truth, we are one and love is all there is. So we enter this field together and we prepare to connect ever more deeply in the next while.

Sadhvi, always a joy to connect with you. Such a gift, such a give to be with and especially to able to do this in person. In person, yeah, sitting, literally basking in energy together.

One thing to do it online where yes, of course, you feel each other's energy, but actually to be able to sit in one space where that energy here we're able then to share with everyone watching is such a gift.

So we're welcoming you all into that energy and feel the energy in your heart right now. We're all part of this enormous, powerful, real energy field.

So Savi, your story, you're amazing story of how your life got derailed by the universe. Yeah, I would say my life got re-railed. In that particular analogy.

It got put back on track. might as well start at the beginning. I grew up in Los Angeles, quite literally in Hollywood, hence the Hollywood to Himalayas title of my memoir.

Literally in hollywood. And had an upbringing that was full of all of the opportunity, privilege, education, prosperity, etc. we think is what you need to be happy.

And if you had looked at me from the outside, you would have said, this girl has everything. You know, we're given this happiness equation in this culture that says, if want happiness, If you want success, You need this type of education, This type Of degree.

you Need to look this way, get invited to these parties, vacation in This resort, et cetera, Et cetera et Cetera. and then you'll be Happy. I had those things.

And then I went off to Stanford University, I graduated from Stanford, and I was in the midst of getting a PhD in psychology. And I had all of these aspects of the happiness equation.

Yet, there were two real streams that kept me from being what I now understand. deeply enjoy. And the first is just, I think, the general truth of the matter, which we all experience, Which is, guess what?

Things don't bring happiness. Guess what, money and titles and degrees and vacations and clothes and et cetera, et cetera, Guess What? They don' bring Happiness.

That whole thing is a complete myth. and that's the General angst that I Think you see in so many people in this culture is we're running after things that we are told to run after.

We get them, but we're still not living in peace. We're not satisfied, we are still experiencing a sense of fullness. And the other stream was a much more personal one, which was the challenges and the suffering and trauma that I had been through in the midst of the great blessings and great privilege and opportunity and greatness all around that my upbringing had.

It also had a lot of struggle. I'd been severely sexually abused in my early childhood.

Sadhvi's Early Life and Privilege

I was then abandoned quite literally by my biological father who, when Iwas eight, announced that he never wanted to see me again. As an adolescent, I became severely bulimic, struggled with depression, anxiety, addiction, the eating disorder, of course, as a way for my mind and psyche to kind of make sense of that which I had experienced to place who I thought I was in the midst of this universe as I though I understood it.

And at 25, I ended up on a plane to India. not by any merit of my own in terms of not any internal voice or calling that said, thou shalt find spirituality, because it's the answer to everything that ails you.

I mean, I wish that I had had that, but I didn't. I was an academic and a scientist and in the midst of taking 21 units a quarter in a psych PhD program.

And I had gotten to the point by 25 where I. Was managing my life. I had done a lot of therapy. I'd been earlier in and out of a bunch of hospitals and treatment centers and whatnot, whatnot.

But by 25, I was really, managing. Managing my meals, my food, emotions, anger, relationships. Married, marriage, studies. And the idea that I needed to bring in this other thing called spirituality was never something that occurred to me.

So I didn't go to India because I had that calling, although I would love to take credit for it. But I went because my husband was on a spiritual path.

He wanted to go India. I agreed to Go to india because i was a very strict vegetarian. and knew that at least in India, I wouldn't have to grill waiters in languages that I didn't speak about what the broth of their chicken, their vegetable soup was, you know, is there chicken broth in your vegetable, soup or are there eggs in this or fish in that, wherever else I had traveled in the world.

eggs would appear on things, or fish would appears on thing, s or chicken broth would appeared in things. And I knew that at least in India that wasn't going to happen to me.

So I agreed to go and… Rishikesh was the very first place we went. You know, I opened up a 500, 600 page Lonely Planet guidebook in Delhi. It was September of 1996. So there was no Google, and we just had this big, thick guidebook.

And I opened it up in Delhi and said, rishikesh. And we get to Rishikesh and hot, tired, sweaty, traveling, et cetera. And I said, I'm going to go put my feet down in the river.

It was just that. I am a nature person. and I was hot and sweaty and tired and thought, i'm just going sit on the

banks of the River and cool down and freshen up and reconnect.

down to the banks of this river I didn't even know was sacred. You know, the Ganga River. The Mother Goddess Gangah. But I did know that. I just knew the river.

Oh yeah, The Ganges. And get down there and had this incredible experience, this incredibly transformational experience of being in the presence of the divine.

You know, it began visually, I'm looking out over this sacred river, and just visually I was suddenly in presence the Divine. I turned my head eventually, I mean, for a while I was just mesmerized, and then I turn my hand and I see tree and people and marble steps and telephone pole and it didn't matter what I looked at, but that presence of the divine was everywhere.

But it wasn't just visual, it was literally every way that I had of knowing was in this experience of divine. And not only was it everywhere around me, but it was in me.

And for the first time in my life, I wasn't separate from the universe. I was not separate form the divine. If you had said to me a month earlier, a week earlier or an hour earlier.

You are divine and God lives in you. I would have said, you know, thank you so much for trying to help out, but I'm really okay. You know the platitudes and the affirmations and whatnot.

But thanks, I appreciate your efforts. It would it would've seemed to me just like something someone was saying to kind of make you feel better. There I was suddenly in this experience of, oh my God, this presence of the divine, not only is it everywhere, but it is in me, it use me.

And there is no place that I end and the world begins. There's no space that end in God begins, there's not place God ends and I begin. It knocked me to the ground in tears of ecstasy, tears, of truth, and tears coming home.

I knew that that's where I'm meant to stay. You know, let's take a moment here and do what we've done before and Do some journaling for a moments.

Trauma, India, and the Ganges Awakening

So grab your journal and make a note of a time you've had something like that a dissolution of boundaries between yourself the infinite and everything around you.

When we do research on these states, we find that both those things happen. People both feel a sense of oneness with the Infinite and also feel the sense the onness with a glass of water, the flower, all the other things around them.

So what was your moment like that. Sufi's called that the glimpse, the Glimpse of Heaven. What was your glimpse? And just make a note of it now in your journal.

You can journal more about it in times to come. But for the time being, just take a look at the title of your Glympse when all of those boundaries disappeared and you found yourself face to face with the infinite.

How long did that state of dissolution of the separatist preview and everything else last? In that particular wave of it, in that State that was so full and so complete, I'd say Fully and completely for many days and in a really powerful way for weeks and yet on some level it has never gone away.

Meaning even if it's not the foremost thing in my mind at every moment and as I'm now able to be somewhat more verbal. I mean, at that time, I was just rendered nonverbal.

All I could say for pretty much days was, oh my god, it's so beautiful. Oh my God, It's a place which I can act. And

which I know is there and which is still my highest truth.

I mean, it's never stopped being the highest. It has just stopped. Being the most predominant experience thought state of my, of mind. But yeah, I'm, able to close my eyes and go back and access that.

So it. On that level, never stop being there. And I'm curious, obviously when you are in a sacred ceremony, when your with your spiritual teacher, it's probably much more in the foreground, but you're an administrator in an ashram as well.

What about in office? Yeah, so that's the piece is that why These moments of prayer, of meditation, and of chanting, being in the presence of holy people, whether it's something you're doing individually, so you are sitting in your room doing your meditation or your prayers or you chanting.

or whether it's ritual and ceremony. And in my life, both of them are part of every day and each of the has very individually powerful aspects. Those moments are so precious because those are the moments when you can just drop back.

into that when you don't have to be in a bit of a binary existence, which on some level we have do in order to navigate through the world. I mean, if I experience complete oneness with the door, I could walk right into it.

If I experienced such, you know, onness with floor, i could fall over onto it and, there's a place in which Neurologically, we speak about proprioception, that ability of the brain to understand where I exist in the world that enables me to stand up from this chair and to not bump into the tripods and the cameras and, you know, the other furniture in their room and kind of navigate my way through the word, which is really important and really beneficial.

But we also know that in deep states of meditation, one of the things that happens in the brain is those centers of proprioception become much more quiet.

And on a neurologic level, it's one the aspects that enables us to feel that oneness, because I'm no longer so aware of where I end and the chair begins or the universe begins.

So yeah, the office is more difficult, absolutely. Airports are difficult. Moving through the world is difficult on that level. For me, it's been really a practice of spaciousness, that it is not either or, you know, in the beginning it was a pendulum swing.

Oh my God, I'm in this ecstasy of oneness, and then oh my god, gotta do this or that. And as time goes by, what you develop is what feels to me like a spacious-ness in which that awareness, the presence of that onness is always there.

Yeah, I'm able to turn my brain intentionally into something that could administer or that figure out how to use an app on my phone or that could… Read the receipt at Costco and make sure you…

Exactly, exactly, to do anything that you've got to be able to that. So as for me, the years have gone by, it's been a matter of expanding into being able in the lila of this is my human incarnation.

And you know, it's true even with the body. It's the same thing whether it is the office or whether its exercise or eating right or getting a checkup.

Its all this aspect that pulls you back into separate existence. I mean, if you're just merged into divinity, like, what does it matter what you eat? What does matter if exercise?

You know, you and I have talked about this before. That impulse, that incentive to do something to take care of the body just disappears into almost ridiculousness when you're in that state of ecstatic oneness.

And yet we are here with a body, with karmic journey, a karnic purpose, and a dharma that we need to fulfill. In

order to do that, we have to keep this body healthy and strong.

You know, in Hindi, it means the body is a temple. And so I have found great joy in that state of expansion into, yes, it's all God. Yes, there is nothing but God, and yeah, I've got this incredibly beautiful body that's been gifted to me by the divine to fulfill my Dharma, to have my karmic journey.

And the body is not something to be negated or ignored or transcended. It's supposed to be experienced and loved and celebrated, just not identified as.

And same thing with whatever role you're playing in your life is, yeah, you got to play the role. Whether you are a mail deliverer or a CEO or window washer or teacher or gas station attendant or whatever you may be, Fully, just don't identify as it.

So that for me has been the piece with the office or the people or teaching or writing, whatever it is, it's all kind of the same. Because it all, here I am in body.

doing this thing whatever the thing may be and as long as I begrudge myself that or as Long as i feel like that is somehow lower than The state of expansion and oneness that I feel Then I'm denying the very point of human existence I am denying The very perfection of that same universe that i'm longing to unite with so it's a bit hypocritical And what I've been working with and finding great joy in is the appreciation of, oh yeah.

Oh yeah, this is also perfect. And oh, yeah here I am in the body fulfilling the role as a vehicle, as vessel. You know, it's like St. Francis of Assisi says so beautifully, God make me an instrument.

An instrument of thy mercy, an instruments of the grace. For me that's the prayer is just let me be an instrumental and whether that instrument at the moment is administering or writing or teaching or traveling or checking out at a grocery store or whatever it may be.

It's an instrument. And you take care of the instrument like Sadevi is emphasizing that we eat and drink and exercise and take of our bodies. And it's really a difference from if you read, for example, some of ancient Hindu scriptures like Christu of Illumination, it refers to the body as a bag of filth or read some the medieval Christian mystics.

They also talk about scourging the body and about the bodies as a burden and so the ancient mystical traditions often had this conception of the Body as being this less than, less in spirit and that's really then and now is now and we now realize that we need vibrant bodies, we needs healthy bodies we needed happy bodies.

We need bodies that are mentally, physically, spiritually in every way are fully alive so we can be that being, that divine being we are through them.

This last weekend I was just laughing and my wife said to me, what are you laughing about? I said, I looked outside, it was a beautiful summer day, and I get to rent this body for another day.

Yes, yes. Go play. It's exactly what it is. And you know, my faith in the divine is so much that I feel like the Divine is perfect. The creation is Perfect.

We've been given these bodies for a reason. You know if you give someone a gift, someone you love, you gave them a And then you see them a year later and they say, guess what, you're going to be so happy.

Guess what? I totally forgot that you gave me that gift. I've neglected it completely. And I put it in the back of my closet and I turned off the light and never opened the door and ignored it so fully that I completely forgot I even have it.

Aren't you happy? You'd be like, what I gave you that out of love. You've ignored it, you've neglected it. You put it in the back of your closet. Why in world would that make me happy?

And I think, well, if that's how we would feel gifting someone something, however you conceive of the divine, whether you say, we've been created in God's image or by God or of God, clearly if we have been given a gift by The idea that what God wants us to do is ignore, neglect, harm, insult, criticize, hate the gift that we've been given.

It makes no sense to me. The aspect around this bag of filth comes in handy when you're doing meditations around I am not the body, when your in that stage of remembering that you are not that body to free yourself from the identification as the Body, because obviously if I'm over identified with the BODY I will suffer.

Letting Go of Trauma Identity

That's, I talk about this as the Hollywood mindset and the Himalayan mindset. The Hollywood mind set being that which says you are your body. You are its size and its shape and it's color and weight and profession and bank account and popularity and power and prestige and all of that.

And so we suffer. We suffer competition and jealousy and not enoughness and insecurity and constantly wanting to be something other than we are. And we bring suffering on others through our competition in jealousy, through an objectification of self and other.

Then the Himalayan way of thinking, the himalian mindset, which says you have a body, but you're nothing. You are soul, you are spirit, You're consciousness, love, truth, divinity.

And that mindset is the end to suffer. And that Hollywood mindset, sadly, is not only in Hollywood these days, it's kind of ubiquitous everywhere. But for me, that was the shift.

In the Himalayan mindset it doesn't say the fact that you're not the body means that should lash it or harm it, or ignore it. It just says don't identify as a body.

So another exercise for you, pick up that journal again. Where in your life right now are you putting yourself down? And Sabi mentioned several different aspects of life, your money, weight, looks, social connections, how popular you are, all of these things are places we can displace our sense of self.

We can project our sensitive self into those things, get all wrapped up in them and then think that's what's important. And so ask yourself that question and just make a note in your journal for later consideration.

where are you projecting yourself into and judging yourself for your imperfections is there some area of your life where you're saying hmm i'm not earning as much as as he is i am not as pretty as she is, iam too big too small too old too young whatever the the criterion might be where fully whole perfect and complete because I can assure you that the universe the divine the infinite does see you as whole perfectly complete exactly the way you are now so make the note in your journal and then you refer to that later on you know Dawson as you say that I'm reminded of a beautiful mantra from the Vedic scriptures that says, And what it means is that the capital T, that, the supreme that what we call Brahman is full and complete and whole and infinite.

Purna means full, infinite, and this which has been created by, removed from, not really removed, but in our concept, from that is also an whole and complete and infinite.

And it's basically the spiritual teaching of the mathematical principle that says what's infinity, you know, divided by 10. infinity. What's infinity divided by 8 billion?

Infinity. Infinity divided 10 billion, 100 billion. A billion billion infinity and the idea that we are created not just by but of, that we are not separate from that infinite, whole, complete, perfect, purna, supreme reality, existence, truth, when we say sat-chit-anand.

That sat means truth but it also means existence which are synonymous when you take truth in its fullest definition. We are one with, inseparable from that truth of existence.

And therefore, we are also porn. We are whole and complete and full. The illusion, what we call Maya, is that which makes us identify with the body, with story, and with narrative.

It's what enables trauma to stay in our lives because we identify As the one who was harmed, that becomes an identity. I was the ones who were abused, abandoned, neglected, rejected, betrayed, harmed in some way.

And that identification becomes how I identify myself. No matter what kind of healing I may do, what work I do. Until I let go. of the identification that that is who I am, I'm gonna be stuck in the trauma forever.

Yeah, you'll be embedded in it rather than be able to be a witness perspective, seeing it, see yourself as someone to whom that happened. And I'm curious as to what your process was, and Sadhavi, I've heard you talk about it a few times in the past before.

I have been involved in over 100 clinical trials over the last 20 or 30 years and worked with a lot of people with PTSD. especially veterans, but also refugees, people who've been in serious car accidents, had serious diagnoses and so on.

And when I hear them talk about it, I can tell pretty much without even hooking them up to an EEG, what is happening with them because if somebody who's traumatized talks about trauma, and they haven't yet fully processed and integrated that yet you can tell you'll see things like their face will flush they may get tense there are physiological signs of stress that will occur and so i watch people very carefully even my friends and as you talk there, are no physical signs, of you being traumatized and there is no psychological or spiritual signs there as well it's not in your field not on your body what happened to help you shift?

Yeah, it's really been grace. It's been Grace. So when I had been in India, or in Ushikesh, Maybe four, five, six days. I asked Pujya Swamiji, who would later become my guru.

At that time, I just knew him as the head of this ashram, this incredible being. And I asked him about fear. I lived in a state of near constant stress, tension, anxiety.

And, you know, it was a very kind of dramatic situation and whether it, was, oh my God, I've got a final exam or oh, my god, there's traffic or, Oh my, God Marvin.

Basically turn anything into an excuse to be really stressed and really worried and a really panicked. So I asked him about that, just like general kind of fear.

I obviously had a huge fear of abandonment. And I had just a lot of fears that ran my life. He said, you fear because you don't trust. Then I gave him my full story.

You know, here's what happened to me. And it was a story that up until that moment had always just gotten me lots of compassion from people. It was, oh my God, you poor thing, and the fact that you're able to get up and walk out of bed every day is in and of itself fantastic.

The fact you've been able succeed is above and beyond what would be expected. I had never had anyone kind of expect more than that of me. And he looks at me and he says, are you going to take that to the grave?

I was like, no, I mean, i was 25. And He said, so, Are you gonna let it go on your deathbed? Maybe a month before you die, maybe a week before your time.

I said God, No, Swamiji, you know, im gonna to let go, but I'm in process. No, I mean process, there's a process I am working on it, in therapy. I don't remember exactly all the details I gave him, but you know there is a processes.

And he looked at me and he said, you're waiting for someone to draw the line. You're for waiting someone come in and say, You can be done. He said no one will.

It's up to you. You can let it go on your deathbed, or you can it let go tonight. And I was like, tonight? And he said, yeah, we have this beautiful ceremony called the arati, the lighting ceremony, which of course I had already seen.

He said and after that ceremony I want you to go into Ganga, sacred river, and I you want to hold her water in your hands and offer into her all of your pain, all your anger and forgive him.

And he said, give it to Ganga. She will take it. And I walked out of his room. I used to keep a journal in those days and I have journal entries from that time that are, they're mortifying to go back and read because I was 25 and over-educated and quite arrogant with the over education that I had achieved as we tend to be.

And the journal entries say things like, just give it to the river. Isn't that quaint? You know, how sweet, but thank God that I live somewhere where we understand process and where you know, ab-reactive therapy and this and that are the ways that you deal with trauma and you don't just rely on a river to sweep it away like it was a banana peel or an apple core and, you now, thank God.

And I had a moment, kind of late afternoon, early evening, that I will always be incredibly grateful for. And it was a moment in which I stopped and I said, all right, look, enough.

Like stop with the mocking. Obviously it's not going to work. Yes, obviously there has to be a process. But the being who has just suggested this to you is an enlightened master.

He's someone worshiped as literally the divine inhuman form on earth. You have no idea why you came to India, which was true. As I've said the only reason I agreed was my husband wanted to go and was I a vegetarian.

I said, you have no idea why you came. Maybe this was why came? Like, just have some respect for God's sakes. Just stop being so obnoxious and arrogant and do it sincerely.

Yes, okay, obviously it's not going to work, but be respectful, be sincere. And so I made a commitment that I would stop mocking it. and that I would at least do it sincerely.

And again, I knew no chance this is gonna work because, hey, there is a process and we've got lots of schools of therapy and psychology that give us processes.

I went into the water after the arity and I have no idea how long I stood there and pulled from within me Every memory that I had of the abuse, of abandonment, the longing, anger, pain, both that of me as a child and me an adult.

And I pulled it up and I kept just giving it into this water. Then I would offer the water back to the river and scoop up more water and prayed and cried.

until eventually I could see his face in my mind's eye and realize that he was not a monster, but that was a haunted human being who was just as haunted by what had happened, if not much more than I was.

And not only could I forgive him, I even felt compassion for how haunted he And I walked out of the river, finally, knowing that she had taken it, And yet the human psyche is so interesting that I then spent the next days, weeks, even months trying to find it again.

Like there was no way that that could have happened. And trying too convince myself that, that which I had experienced wasn't real. and that I was still sick and unworthy of being in this place and unworthy of the healing and trying to make myself trigger, trying make something make me want to vomit, pushing me back into bulimia, making me decompensate, and nothing could.

And Finally, finally my brain, my mind, and my conditioned psyche agreed to go into the place that my heart and inner knowing was already in.

which was freedom. But it took a long time and it's so funny in retrospect that eagerness of the mind to convince me, no, you're still sick. No, that didn't actually happen.

You're not free. And how long it take the mine to finally let go. I think about it sometimes as my ego being this out of work actor. standing on a street corner, reciting the lines that it used to recite in the play that was this big production and, you know, that played every night and everybody came to see, but the plays long since closed and the theater's gone.

But this actor just cannot get his head around the fact that, life has moved on and so stands on the street corners, sort of recited his lines to anybody who walks by.

And I think of my ego mind sometimes like that, especially in those early days that it was just had this attachment to still being. And that's where this identification comes in.

So fast forward about two years later, a year and a half to two We were in Delhi and we were about to go see, there was a group of schools, 10, 11 schools that we had adopted in this slum area outside of Delhi.

And we are about go to see them and it was project that I was really engaged in and I talking to Swamiji very, very casually and was talking about the kids and the work and said something.

about how fulfilling it was to work with them and that identification that I had with these kids living in the slum because, you know, I have been abused.

And so from my childhood of abuse, it gave me this identification. I wasn't going into a very dark or heavy moment. It was really quite casual. But he says to me, he said, when are you going to stop talking about that?

And it was this hit of, I have forgiven, and I've let go. I am not suffering. The bulimia disappeared like day one. And yet on some core level, this is my identity.

What do you mean? When am I going to stop talking about it? I was about to get insulted and sort of self-righteous when I stopped and I realized that there I, was that was when this image of the ego on the street corner popped into my mind the first time.

And I realize that that, that kind of who I and that really it was time to let go not only of pain, but of the whole narrative of this is why I do things.

So yeah, I want to help kids because I've got this and this the narrative and the story and then need to let go of that whole of narrative trauma. And so I literally didn't talk about it for 25 years.

It wasn't until I wrote Hollywood to the Himalayas just a few years ago. that I finally publicly spoke about it. And it's interesting, because people had said, oh, she had kept this secret.

It's like, no, it wasn't a secret, It was kind of all I talked about for many years of my younger life. But it was so necessary for me to stop identifying as that.

was able to share the story without identification, but also to it in a way we realized when discussions were around about kind of how raw and vulnerable and honest and totally open was I as an ordained, well-known, robed religious leader with a platform in India who don't talk about things like this, like how much was going to talk I realized I wanted to talk about all of it because so many people feel like they are disqualified from grace because of something that's happened to them because we've got this portrait of religious spiritual teachers as those who haven't had suffering.

And that there was this kind of preconception of me as, you know, this sort of virginal angel who had descended

from the Stanford clouds onto Rishikesh.

and that not only was that completely untrue but it was really detrimental to people's own work because then they held me at this arm's length and kind of put me on this pedestal as though I was cut from a different cloth and people would start prefacing questions with things like Well, I know you're too pure to think like this, but, or I knew that you would never struggle with something like, this but.

And I thought, wait, a moment here. Don't put me on a pedestal like that, I am not cut from a different cloth. I know exactly where you're coming from.

And you can be free because I learned how to do that. So many of the incredible masters we have are basically men who came out of The Woman Lightened.

I mean, I know my guru is one who has not suffered, has experienced any level of pain, suffering, challenge, on any other level. And we've got stories of these masters who have either very early childhood awakening experiences or literally come onto this planet like that.

And so people feel like, well, I mired in my humanity, mire in in anger and my pain and jealousy and rage and fear and PTSD. I'm disqualified from grace.

That that which I've been given as the trauma was so powerful, not just for my life experience, but to be able to say to people, grace doesn't discriminate.

Mired in your humanity, you can also be spiritual. You can have these spiritual experiences, this spiritual knowledge, the spiritual transformation, and this realization as long as you're prepared.

to let go of the story and that that's the critical piece, the extent to which we hold on to the narrative. And the last last piece I wanted just to mention when you were talking about not identifying with the body but the Buddhist aspect of witnessing and kind of watching that it had happened to you, but that you are not that body.

One of my favorite ways of actually thinking about it is if that which happened you happened more than seven or eight years ago, there's not a cell on your body to which that happened.

That being is doesn't mean that what happened was not horrendous and awful and should never have happened and was excruciatingly painful to the being to whom it happened.

But that's not you. There was no part of me who sat in front of Swamiji who actually had been abused. Not a single cell of my being. Every cell of our being within seven, eight years is regenerated.

I mean, the skin cells where most of us are abused are regenerating every few days. Most of don't have our liver or kidneys abused, but if you did, those would take, you know, seven eight, nine years maximum to regenerate.

That being is gone, but we carry the story in our minds and that's the piece that needs to be let go. And what that means is that we've got to figure out, well, who would I be if I were not the one who was abused?

And for me, that is where being in India was such incredible grace because The universe had given me a whole new place, community, role, way of thinking, etc.

And I know it's much more of a challenge when you don't have your entire external world changed. But I do think that that's such a critical piece for us to create.

is, well, if I'm not the one who was abused, who am? What am I going to think about? Who are my friends going be? what am i going do with my life? Because so much of not just our minds and our hearts and emotions and, you know, dysfunction, but our relationships and jobs and what we do every day and how we are products of this narrative of trauma.

If I were not the one who was traumatized, what would my life look like?

Forgiveness and Freedom

Who would I be? Because otherwise, if you let it go, you're letting it into the void. Which, as incredibly alluring as it is from a Buddhist meditative perspective, is really scary from non-Buddhist meditative human perspective.

And to just say, I'm going to let go of this narrative and drop into the void can be scary. It's a gorgeous place to go. So I would encourage everyone to please, you know, have the courage to do there.

But you don't have to make that your first step. As Dawson's given you these, these beautiful and continues to give you this beautiful journaling exercises.

I will just add one, which is who am I? Other than that. the story I tell myself about the one who experienced trauma. Who else is there? And yeah, at the far end, I'm soul, and spirit, but even just in this human incarnation.

Are you an artist? Are a musician? A poet? Gardener? An animal lover? Whatever it may be. Are tree hugger? Cook? Who else are you than that? What could you fill your day with if it weren't ways that you navigate the fact that your are the one who was traumatized?

How would you make a living? Some of it may be the same, but some of may different. And get an idea of that first so that you realize that which you're dropping into isn't such a scary void but is actually a really beautiful, full human existence aside even from the you are spirit, you our soul, your divine.

So let's break that down into several questions as we're journaling and bringing our time together to a close. I want you to answer a few questions, write these down in your journal.

You can ask them later, you can maybe make a note about them now. But what old story are you clinging to most that doesn't serve you? Number one, what old story do you cling to most that doesn't serve you now?

Maybe it used to serve, you maybe you were a wonderful actor, maybe the audience would applaud every time you told the story. Like Sadi you would tell her story and get so much sympathy and so get much attention for telling it.

And now you've been telling, it's long past its expiration date and what might that story be in your life? So ask yourself what that that's story is. Number two, how attached are you to that store?

And you can just give that a grade from zero to 10, like a story I'm really attached to telling. I'll be telling this story for the next decade. That's a 10 out of 10. And it's the story that you don't mind letting go.

than it's zero or one or another low number. So grade how committed you are to your story on that scale of zero to 10. Number three, as you reflect on the story and your number, What do you feel in your body?

I mentioned that I watch sadhbi, I watched people very closely when they're telling their trauma stories because I want to see if there are those physiological responses to them still.

I remember being in a workshop many, many years ago when I was learning energy medicine with a woman who had been sexually assaulted and she was incredibly triggered even 20 years after the event.

after we worked with her after she got an energy intervention. It was amazing. She went down from a 10 out of 10 to a zero and she could tell the whole story without any trace of emotional charge.

So notice your degree of emotion charge and where does it land in your body when you think of that old story. The next thing I want you to reflect on is Sodby's big question, which is, who might I be?

Who would I do without that story? If I abandon the story, if I just wash the storey away in the Ganges or in

metaphorical flow of life, Who will I without that story, who's the me?

And she had you in fact do a little more than just imagine who you would be without the story. She invited you to go into detail. What would your life look like in detail?

What might you be doing? How might your days be different without So you obviously can't write an essay about that right now, but just make a note to ask yourself, who would I be?

What would my life look like? without that story. Now, I'm going to wrap this up with one other reminder, which is that you are the way you, and it's not as though when we've lost our stories, we're perfect.

We're whole, We are complete right now, And we are worthy of love right Now. Sadhu was emphasizing earlier that because those things happen to you doesn't mean that your undeserving of grace.

We're all infinitely undeserving of grace, and infinitely deserving of Grace at every moment, whatever our lives look like. So you are loved, you're infinitely deserving grace.

However your life is, whether you let go of your stories or not, grace is infinite. You're not letting go of those stories to improve. You let me go those story is to surrender and simply be present to the grace of the love that is there already.

So as you reflect on this, as You complete these exercises, just know that it's all in the context of you being okay, you mean fine just the way you are, the great Client-centered therapist Carl Rogers said the paradox of growth is that growth begins, transformation starts.

when we accept ourselves just the way we are. That's a better future state we imagine we'd like to be in. We won't be acceptable once we lost 20 pounds or 200 pounds, or made this money or married this person or divorced this personal move to Boulder, Colorado or moved to Bali or gone on this vacation.

It's not then that we will be fine and acceptable. Where just we just accept our selves. we love ourselves, we except ourselves. Just the and the paradox he said is that when we do that suddenly all the tension that has been wrapped up in our demands for perfection on ourselves disappears and that liberates the energy to grow so start by simply accepting yourself the way you are so I'd be any last thoughts before we close our time together with our beautiful community Just that I'm so happy to be with you all and so touched to being invited into this space.

And to just remind everyone that it's possible. I'd love to end, I think, with answering a question that, since we're not live taking questions, hasn't been asked, but tends to always be asked.

Which is around forgiveness. That which was done to so many of us is unforgivable by the definitions that we use in our ethical, moral, legal, civic definitions.

People have done things to us that by all standards are wrong. In some cases, they're even criminally wrong, we don't forgive. Because what someone did was okay.

Forgiveness does not mean that what that person did is okay, that we are ready for them to do it again, they should be absolved legally, morally, karmically from it.

forgiveness means one thing and one only, you deserve to be free. You don't forgive to absolve someone. We don' even have that power. Until and unless God comes down and taps you on the shoulder and says, you know, hey, could you do me a favor?

Keep a note for me of who's done what and make sure not to forget. I need you to be my kind of karmic secretary in charge. Unless that happens, we are not the karnic police.

We're not in-charge of what happens to people. The law of karma is perfect. It functions perfectly without our

interference or involvement. If you plant an apple seed, you don't have to stand over it like this, it's gonna become an Apple tree.

It's the law of nature. You don' have hold on to it or remind it, or even remember, in the seed is the intelligence to become that Apple Tree. In the same way, the actions that people have done is this seed of the karmic repercussion that will come to them.

And you dont'have to hold onto it. you forgive only, only. One reason, one reason only because you deserve to be free. And if you don't forgive, essentially what you're saying is, you hurt me once, or maybe you heard me a hundred times, but I'm gonna make sure that I hurt for the rest of my life.

I am gonna carry that hurt into the next of life, which turns us from being victims into being perpetrators. They were the perpetrator once or a 100 times.

But every day that we continue to live in that story, we become the perpeter of our own pain. And it's like saying, I'm gonna, you know, You've already hurt me.

I am now going to take my life, my joy, My freedom, and I will offer it. And I'll offer on the altar of your ignorance, your violence, Your confusion, or fear, whatever it is that made you do to me, Whatever you did to.

On that altar, now I offer the rest of my Life and every bit of possibility of joy that I have. That's not a smart decision. It's a decision you don't need to make.

We forgive because we deserve to be free and that's it. And when you realize that you deserve be to free, you step into the process of forgiveness and letting go.

I just am so honored to with you all in that experience. And as you feel this beautiful energy we have in this moment, let's end our time together the way we began it and take those conscious breaths.

So you'll feel the energy, we had right now, celebrate that, imagine every person in our community connecting now. Feel your heart, feel their hearts and feel us all connected.

Closing Breaths and Farewell

in this energy of appreciation, in his energy release, this is energy surrender, it's energy perfection and together we breathe a few conscious breaths to celebrate that connection and acknowledgement.

So again being aware of your body, feeling the natural rhythm of your breath in and out, feeling your heart, your connection to everyone present now. and the circle of love, compassion, and grace that flows through the sacred moment.

Three more breaths slowly in. And out. In. and out in and out. Well thank you so much for joining us in this expansive space and awareness and consciousness and being.

Thank you Sadhvi for sharing your grace, your radiance, you insights, and your story. And that old story still has a lot of value to offer people. So thanks for sharing that and through that shining the being that you came to this earth to express and to be.

Thank you. It's been such a joy and such gift. uh bless you we will see you on the next episode thank you for tuning into doctor talks we hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you Stay connected, stay healthy, and join us next time on Doctor Talks, real talks from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.