

**GOOD MORNING... ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- **Seva Saturday for this month is Sat., July 13** — Please note that on your calendar: 10am-2pm, lunch provided. Come as you can, serve as you are able and is practical for you.
- **Please plan to attend our weekend Retreat** on Karma Yoga, on the 20th and 21st of this month. On Saturday the 20th, the Retreat program will start at 10am and end at 4:30p. **Swami Chandrashekharanandaji**, Head of the Portland, OR Vedanta Society, will lead Saturday's gathering; there will be a reception and potluck supper for him after Arati that evening. On Sunday morning the Swami will speak on "The True Joy of Living."
- **Swami Bodhanandaji** will speak with us in Sept. this year, and **Swami Yogatmanandaji** will come for his annual visit at the end of Nov. (introduce both swamis)
- **Bookshop note: Cash will be accepted** for purchases only on Sundays, and on Tues. and Wed. evenings, before and after class.

On other days of the week, please bring a check to buy books.

- **Also, note that your Center will be closed in August** — no activities except evening Arati. This will be our routine, each summer.

## **CHANT • SONG • WELCOME • TOPIC**

July is a month for study of Karma Yoga, a spiritual path leading to the abandonment of selfishness. As a karma yogi, you practice offering your actions and their results, as well as your perceptions, thoughts, and feelings to the Divine Presence.

Even before fully knowing this Presence, you hold firmly to the belief that the Presence *is* within each person or other living being that you interact with or serve. Working and abiding in this spirit, you are increasingly able to release attachment to your activities and their results.

This yields the freedom and contentment promised by Karma Yoga.

*“Even a little practice of this yoga will save you from the terrible wheel of rebirth and death ...” — Sri Krishna, Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 2*

Topic of this morning’s talk is  
**What Do You Rehearse?**

Spiritual practice allows you to observe your thoughts and feelings, your personal “inner reality.” As you learn to watch your thoughts, you realize that, subconsciously, you affirm again and again a particular version of reality. These affirmations are rehearsals of a “play” you believe in, and the roles you have learned to enact.

Yet, great spiritual teachers tell us that the play itself, and the characters you appear to be, are nothing more than fabrications of your mind.

For example, Sage Vasistha told Lord Rama: “The mind-stuff (*citta*) is the cause of the existence of all material objects. As long as there is *citta*, the three worlds (waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep) also appear in one’s perception as real.” (*Nectar of Supreme Knowledge*, 4.9)

Therefore, what you are experiencing as you sit here this morning is indeed the Highest Reality, **seen through the veils of time, space and causation — Maya.** Vasistha says your mind-stuff (*citta*) is the instrument by which Maya manifests what you perceive as real. Swami Vivekananda calls this a “lesser reality,” Adi Shankara, a “relative” reality.

Yet, as Swami Vivekananda insists, this “lesser reality,” which is caused by your past and present thoughts and actions, **can be changed by new actions and different thoughts.** You can, quite deliberately, rewrite your play!

For example, a Harvard University neuroscientist, Jill Bolte Taylor, had a massive stroke that took her left-hemisphere mind completely “off-line.” As a result, she discovered a right-hemisphere personality of which she’d been completely unaware.

As Taylor worked for years to regain her left-brain functions, she learned: “Nothing external to me (has) the power to take away my peace of heart and mind. That (is) completely up to me.

I may not be in total control of what happens to my life, but I certainly am in charge of how I choose to perceive my experience.” — *from her book "My Stroke of Insight"*

This morning, we will explore the meaning of these ideas, and how they integrate with the practice of Karma Yoga.

*“There’s a wonder in the way we’re always free to change the world by changing how we see ...”*  
— from “Love’s Shining Peace” by Cyndi Craven

## BEAU LOTTO

Beau Lotto is a neuroscientist and artist who studies perception. He is founder of Lottolab, a hybrid art studio and science lab. With glowing, interactive sculpture — and old-fashioned peer-reviewed research—he's illuminating the mysteries of the brain's visual system.

*The British Science Association said of Lotto:*

*“All his work attempts to understand the visual brain as a system defined, not by its essential properties, but by its past ecological interactions with the world. In this view, the brain evolved to see what proved useful to see, to continually redefine normality.”*

Lotto has proven:

NO ONE IS AN OUTSIDE OBSERVER OF  
NATURE

EACH OF US IS DEFINED BY OUR ECOLOGY\*

... ECOLOGY IS NECESSARILY RELATIVE,  
HISTORICAL AND EMPIRICAL

— *from Lotto's TED Talk*

\*ecology: noun

1. the branch of biology dealing with the relations and interactions between organisms and their environment, including other organisms.

2. Also called human ecology. the branch of sociology concerned with the spacing and interdependence of people and institutions.

**Here are three examples of people who successfully, and dramatically, redefined themselves:**

### **TEMPLE GRANDIN, PhD**

Dr. Grandin didn't talk until she was three and a half years old, communicating her frustration instead by screaming ... and humming. In 1950, Temple was diagnosed with autism.

She tells her story of "groping her way from the far side of darkness" in her book *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*, a book which stunned the world because, until its publication, most professionals and parents assumed that an autism diagnosis was virtually a death sentence to achievement or productivity in life.

Even though she was considered "weird" in her young school years, she eventually found a mentor, who recognized her interests and abilities.

She developed her talents into a successful career as a livestock-handling equipment designer, one of very few in the world. She has designed the facilities in which half the cattle are handled in the United States, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald's, Swift, and others.

Dr. Grandin has become a prominent author and speaker on the subject of autism because "I have read enough to know that there are still many parents, and yes, professionals too, who believe that 'once autistic, always autistic.' This dictum has meant sad and sorry lives for many children diagnosed, as I was in early life, as autistic.

To these people, it is incomprehensible that the characteristics of autism can be modified and controlled. However, I feel strongly that I am living proof that they can" (from her book, *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*).

## **JAMES DOTY, MD**

Doty is an American neurosurgeon, entrepreneur, and philanthropist.

Doty's interests stems from growing up in a family on public assistance — welfare. As a result of his upbringing, he witnessed a puzzling paradox:

Those with power, influence or position often do not intervene in situations where others were suffering, and conversely, he saw those with little or nothing often giving everything they have to help someone who has even less.

Doty's life changed at age 13 years when he walked into a magic shop one summer. The owner of the magic shop was not there, but the owner's mother was. After talking with Doty for a while, she offered to teach him something that "could change your life" if he agreed to meet with her daily for the remaining six weeks of summer.

He did meet with her and during that time she taught him a meditation and visualization practice. Doty says, "she changed my life by changing my perspective from one of limited to no possibilities to one of endless possibilities". Prior to this, Doty says that oftentimes he felt he was "like a leaf being blown by an ill wind".

The son of an invalid mother, raised in poverty, he worked hard in school, so that when he got into Tulane University he could work even harder. Result: he got into the medical school and became a doctor.



At Stanford University in 2007, Doty began collaborative research explorations into the neuroscience of compassion and altruism, with his Stanford colleagues.

As part of his interest in these subjects, he met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was so intrigued by the work that Doty had begun that he made a personal donation of \$150,000, which was soon thereafter followed by donations of over 2 million dollars.

What had begun as an informal research initiative called “Project Compassion” was formalized within Stanford’s School of Medicine as the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE). CCARE is now recognized throughout the world as a leading research and educational institution and the only such institution solely focused on the study of compassion, altruism and empathy.

## **JILL BOLTE TAYLOR, PhD**

*From “My Stroke of Insight”*

One of the greatest lessons I learned was how to feel the physical component of emotion. Joy was a feeling in my body. Peace was a feeling in my body.

I thought it was interesting that I could feel when a new emotion was triggered. I could feel new emotions flood through me and then release me.

I had to learn new words to label these "feeling" experiences, and *most remarkably, I learned that I had the power to choose whether to hook into a feeling and prolong its presence in my body, or just let it quickly flow right out of me.*

I made my decisions based upon how things felt inside. There were certain emotions like anger, frustration, or fear that felt uncomfortable when they surged through my body. *So I told my brain that I didn't like that feeling and didn't want to hook into those neural loops.*

I learned that I could use my left mind, through language, to talk directly to my brain and tell it what I wanted and what I didn't want. Upon this realization, I knew I would never return to the personality I had been before.

I suddenly had much more to say about how I felt and for how long, and I was adamantly opposed to reactivating old painful emotional circuits.

Paying attention to what emotions feel like in my body has completely shaped my recovery.

I spent eight years watching my mind analyze everything that was going on in my brain. Each day brought new challenges and insights. The more I recovered my old files, the more my old emotional baggage surfaced, and the more I needed to evaluate the usefulness of preserving its underlying neural circuitry.

Emotional healing was a tediously slow process but well worth the effort. As my left brain became stronger, it seemed natural for me to want to "blame" other people or external events for my feelings or circumstances.

*But realistically, I knew that no one had the power to make me feel anything, except for me and my brain. Nothing external to me had the power to take away my peace of heart and mind.*

That was completely up to me. I may not be in total control of what happens to my life, but I certainly am in charge of how I choose to perceive my experience.” — *from "My Stroke of Insight"*

## **VIVEKANANDA**

“The finer is always the cause, the grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal the cause...”

There cannot be a cause without an effect, the present must have had its cause in the past and will have its effect in the future.”

### **SRI KRISHNA, Bhagavad Gita CH 13**

“The body is called the Field (of Action), because a man sows seeds of action in it, and reaps their fruits. Wise men say the Knower of the Field is he who watches what takes place within this body.” (Tie to Karma Yoga)

**“There’s a wonder in the way we’re always free/to change the world by changing how we see ...”**

### **DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS.**

### **Regular Closing prayer**