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Notice the Journey

Spiritual Direction,
Coaching & Restorative Yoga

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Shannon Michael Pater

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Meditating Dog with Chanting Monks

NOTICE NOTES

The Monthly Newsletter of **Notice The Journey**

Volume 1, Issue 3

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Hello from the Himalayas

Hello Dear Heart,

I hope this finds you safe and well.

Last month (6 July) was the Dalai Lama's 85th birthday. It's always a very special day here in McLeod Ganj (his residence in exile) and this year was made even more special by the fact that he was in his residence (but unseen because of COVID-19).

My two closest friends here, an expat from Australia and another from Canada, and I went early in the morning to the Kora, the walk around the temple complex. There was a lot of chanting and celebrating for several hours. You can see a street dog "meditating with the monks" in the pic above and can see that the monks (and all of us) had on our masks (pic to the side).

To celebrate in the afternoon, my Australian friend and I got new tattoos. My new installation was a Sanskrit symbol for "Breathe" and the great mantra of compassion "Om Mani Padme Hum" (in Tibetan script). In the tattoo shop is a sticker that reads "Get Tattoos or Die Naked." With or without clothes at the time of my death, I'm most definitely not going to die naked. (Wink)

In the middle of the month I shifted locations within my small mountain village from one end to the other (about a 15 minute walk). Now I look out at the Kangra valley and directly at the residence of the Dalai Lama. It's monsoon season and I "live in the clouds;" I often cannot see more than 50 feet off my balcony, but when the clouds part, it is glorious.

For nearly five months, I've not left my village, except to go trekking in the mountains and forest around this area. You can see a click below of me meditating by the stream under Bhagsu falls (the next village up). It is a sacred

place for me. Yesterday, for the first time in that long, I actually got in a vehicle (tuk tuk and then a taxi) to go down and up the hill 15 minutes to Dharamshala. I live in a village; Dharamshala is a small town. Still, it was strange to see so “many” people. To think that just a few months ago I lived in one of the world’s largest cities (Mumbai).

I have been working a great deal on “Air Into Breath” a restorative breathing program and launched it a few weeks ago. It’s a self-paced 4-Unit program; there is more information about it below and on [my website](#). The audio Centering Meditation (further below) is based on some of the material for Unit 2. If you have interest in the program, please [send me an email](#).

May you know the graces of shalom, shanti, and salaam. Peace be with you,
Shannon Michael

Shannon Michael Pater
Psy.D. | Yoga Alliance E-RYT 500 & YACEP
Yoga Teachers College® Breath Coach



Air Into Breath

A 4-Unit Introduction to Restorative Breathing

So YHWH fashioned an earth creature out of the clay of the earth, and blew into its nostrils the breath of life. And the earth creature became a living being.

—Genesis 2:7, *The Inclusive Bible*

Each day the average person takes around 20,000 breath-cycles of an inhale and exhale. We can go weeks without food, days with water, but most begin to experience irritation, agitation, and anxiety within a few seconds and death within a few minutes without breathing.

Each breath brings Wisdom and information. Each cycle is an opportunity to interact with our autonomic nervous system. Mindful breathing can help us to emotionally regulate.

Air Into Breath is a self-paced, 4-Unit restorative breathing program that can help with stress management, balance the nervous system, increase emotional regulation, support trauma recovery, and improve sleep. It is an excellent foundation for a restorative yoga or meditation practice.

The 4-unit program includes:

- Audio files of guided practices and meditations (balancing breath, parasympathetic up-regulating, and sympathetic up-regulating);
- PDF study materials; topics include: the

anatomy
and
science
of
respiration
and
the
nervous
system,
philosophy
and
reflection
on
breathing,
and
practice
support;

- 4
30-
minute
individual
consultations
to
support
the
development
of
your
personal
practice
and
answer
questions.

This program is not “movement-based” and requires NO yoga experience.

**For more information, download the program flyer on
the front page of my website.**



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Meditating at Bhagsu Waterfall

Centering Meditation

Some of the materials for Unit 2 of "Air Into Breath" uses Rumi's poem "The Guest House." Even though he died on 17 December 1273, he is usually the "best-selling" poet in the U.S. The Sufi mystic still has much to teach us.

The Guest House

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.*

*(They) may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes,
because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.*

—Jelaluddin Rumi
translation by Coleman Barks, alt.

Click here for a 5 minute audio meditation on "The Guest House"

*Music in the meditation is from "Bija: Soothing Music and Mantras for Yoga and Meditation" by Todd Norian, www.ashayayoga.com. Used with permission. All rights reserved. (And highly recommended!)

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Website Updates

My "Air Into Breath: Restorative Breathing" program has a lot of resources for each Unit (books, articles, websites, audio files, etc.). **I've created a new resource page and will be listing them there.**

Other Resources

New clicks in my Miksang photography collection.

Previous newsletters are archived here.

Over 60 Mary Oliver quotes with citations.

An oft-updated list of books and resources for trauma studies.



Spiritual Direction, Coaching & Restorative Yoga

My professional practice includes three primary support options:

Trauma-informed **spiritual direction** is for anyone who wants a compassionate witness and companion to help you explore a deeper connection with your sacred core, to wonder with you as you sort and sift your life, or to journey with you as you “bring the exiles home,” those parts of ourselves we reject.

Spiritual direction can focus “simply” on the journey itself or on developing a spiritual practice (mindfulness, meditation, breathing, etc.). Often folk do both.

[Click here for more information on spiritual direction.](#)

Coaching, while grounded in the core practices of compassion and non-judgment of spiritual direction, adds goal-setting, developing skills and best practices, and implementation as a focus. In this relationship we partner together to move “from awareness to action.” [Click here for more information on coaching.](#)

Restorative yoga is “embodied spiritual direction;” your breath is your primary director. This practice involves a deep noticing of our bodies in an attempt to befriend the parasympathetic nervous system (“rest and digest”) through breathing techniques, mindfulness, and guided meditations (savasana and yoga nidra). [Click here for more information on restorative yoga.](#)



Social Media Links

My social media links are below. I'm starting to post more regularly and "likes, loves, comments and follows" are always helpful.



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