



Daren Black Of PracticalAyurveda On How To Write A Book That Sparks A Movement



Finding Real Yoga is an effort to set the record straight. This book offers an authentic perspective that reconnects people with deeper purpose. Hopefully, people who read Finding Real Yoga will get a taste of the power behind these ancient disciplines.

As part of my series about “How to write a book that sparks a movement” I had the pleasure of interviewing Daren Black.

Daren Black, M.A., is an Ayurvedic healer, holistic health educator, yoga expert, and award-winning author, whose life is a testament to resilience, transformation, and spiritual mastery. After immersing himself in yoga and meditation in the 1970s, a series of devastating tragedies including car accidents, chronic illness, heartbreak, and homelessness, pushed him to the brink. Refusing to surrender, Black’s turning point came in 1988 when he met renowned spiritual teacher, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, whose guidance and holistic practices helped restore his health and purpose. Becoming one of the first teachers of the Art of Living in California, Black went on to found PracticalAyurveda.com and Nature Power™, helping thousands integrate Ayurvedic principles into modern life. His award-winning book, Finding Real Yoga, distills decades of lived experience into a powerful guide for authentic healing, self-mastery, and lasting transformation.

Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series! Can you share the “backstory” of how you grew up?

As a teenager, I got into organic gardening. In college, I started doing yoga and meditation. That was a major turning point in my life.

My parents were super strict. When I turned five, they announced that I was old enough to wash the family dinner dishes. Since I was small, I could not reach the kitchen sink. They stood me on top of a stepstool so I could reach into the sink. My arms were too short to reach to the bottom of the sink. My parents did not like that I kept asking them to help me grab all the things that needed to be washed. They were angry that I did not know what to do.

After a couple of fumbled plates and a bit of chaos, the parents reluctantly realized they would need to wait a few years for me to be big enough to handle washing the dishes. Since I couldn’t wash the dishes, my parents were very happy to inform me that my new job would be to empty the household trash. Every day. This required going to every room and emptying all the smaller wastebaskets into the big wastebasket from the laundry room. Once all the household trash was dumped into the large, plastic container I had to take it outside to dump into the trash can.

Taking out the trash was expected of me every single day until I moved out of the house.

For most of my life I was extremely shy, awkward, and inhibited. My parents kept me hidden in my bedroom most of the time when guests were over. My observations were generally not welcome.

In contrast, I had a serious streak of recklessness. I trained with a champion bicycle racer who was famous for winning every race he ever entered. He had a room full of trophies. I would ride down giant hills, on PCH in Malibu, maximizing my speed to see if I could beat any of the cars. This was in the 1970s when people would honk, yell, and throw things at bicycle riders on PCH. There were no helmets then. And no bike lane. One rock or hole in the ground and I would have been finished.

When you were younger, was there a book that you read that inspired you to take action or changed your life? Can you share a story?

When I was 12 years old, I read Hawaii by James Michener. That book provoked me to feel outrage about the abuse and destruction of indigenous culture. Arnold Ehret’s Mucousless Diet Healing System helped me to think about the importance of healthy diet when I was 17. I read the first 3 Carlos Castaneda books as a teenager. That made me yearn to have an unusual or advanced experience. Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramahansa Yogananda fueled my spiritual yearning. Reading Yogananda’s book was always soothing to me. It felt very real even though it portrayed experiences that were quite foreign to my upbringing.

What was the moment or series of events that made you decide to bring your message to the greater world? Can you share a story about that?

I kept getting a feeling that I needed to put a book together. It would pop up in my awareness and I would chew on it for a bit. Life kept throwing urgencies in front of me that would interrupt the thought process. Finally, the idea was too strong to ignore. I started writing what I thought would be introductory material for the book in roughly 2012. Many weeks later, I went back and read it over. I was bothered by what I felt was the immaturity of that section. Eventually, I ended up tossing it out. My experiences in the early years with Gurudev Sri Sri were too important to leave undocumented. Preserving that history with honesty and clarity was critical for me.

What impact did you hope to make when you wrote this book?

I hoped to correct some widespread misunderstandings about yoga, meditation, and ayurvedic holistic health. Many people skew the practices to fit their own habits, preferences, addictions, and/or thought patterns. They don’t realize that their own toxic baggage is getting in the way.

Did the actual results align with your expectations? Can you explain?

Here and there I can say yes, people are getting it. But I think it is a little too early to make that assessment in the broader sense.

What moment let you know that your book had started a movement? Please share a story.

It wasn’t really a single moment. After several reviews had piled up, I felt that it was definitely worth getting the book out. It is truly wonderful to see that people are feeling moved, motivated, and inspired.

What kinds of things did you hear right away from readers? What are the most frequent things you hear from readers about your book now? Are they the same? Different?

Another author told me that Finding Real Yoga is important and necessary. A friend said that it would be widely read.

People frequently refer to the book as a guide or resource. I continue to be surprised by some of the enthusiastic comments.

What is the most moving or fulfilling experience you’ve had as a result of writing this book? Can you share a story?

Many people have told me they love Finding Real Yoga. It is a supreme pleasure to be able to help enrich people’s lives. One person told me they

got goose bumps reading a certain section about a miracle that saved my life.

Have you experienced anything negative? Do you feel there are drawbacks to writing a book that starts such colossal conversation and change?

Books like Finding Real Yoga provoke deeper thinking and honest introspection. Some people get excited about that. Others aren’t ready to face certain issues.

Like life in general, it’s a mixed bag. When people get stuck in habits, they often become addicted to the style, the way they do whatever it is. It could be how they eat or how they do yoga or many other things. But then just because they are used to it, some think it is THE correct way or even the BEST way. Then they have lost their ability to think clearly about it. Out of that comes proponents and sales pitches and rationalizations for doing things their way. That’s where you get “this is the best style” labels.



Ayurveda says that toxins in a person’s body will cause resistance to change. Physical or emotional toxins have a cozy place to live in the body. The toxins will try to stop people from doing things that would remove the toxins. Hopefully, people will end up being wise enough to see the truth beyond their habits, toxins, and preference-based beliefs.

Can you articulate why you think books in particular have the power to create movements, revolutions, and true change?

Books are an easy way to learn new things. Books can reveal truths that have been concealed or forgotten. Mainstream society sweeps many things under the proverbial rug. When you talk about important truth it can ignite fires of enthusiasm.

What is the one habit you believe contributed the most to you becoming a bestselling writer? (i.e. perseverance, discipline, play, craft study) Can you share a story or example?

Throughout my life I have approached most things with an attitude of perseverance. Especially after realizing that my own father stole money from me, I felt my life was mainly up to my own actions.

Other things added emphasis. Such as, by my quitting smoking and drinking at age 14, going through divorce, having accidents, and dealing with homelessness.

I do not give up easily. Determination has kept me going. The breathing techniques and the grace of Gurudev Sri Sri have polished and made that sparkling.

What challenge or failure did you learn the most from in your writing career? Can you share the lesson(s) that you learned?

Some people have told exaggerations and lies so many times they think it is truth. It is disgusting and repulsive. Seeing that going on gave me more motivation to finish writing Finding Real Yoga.

Basics are always important. Things like backing up documents. I lost some material and had to write it over again because of a foolish accident. I spilled some oil on a laptop keyboard. It ruined the computer. I ended up buying a new laptop.

Many aspiring authors would love to make an impact similar to what you have done. What are the 5 things writers need to know if they want to spark a movement with a book?

1. Karma is a major factor

It’s a big aspiration. It doesn’t just follow from intention. Sometimes, it can happen by accident. How can you predict? Most people could not make any such prediction. It is like asking; what are the 5 things you need to know to become governor of a state, or a famous actor? Kind of a random idea.

2. Build a community early

It helps to have a group of people, such as an email list. You can inform your list about your progress. When you have a draft ready you can ask if anyone would like to read the draft.

3. Utilize reader feedback

Once your editing is completed you can offer preview copies and request that people post reviews once they have finished reading. Reviews make a big difference in sales.

4. Purify your intention

Purification of intention is paramount. The more you cleanse yourself via spiritual practices the more energy you will have behind your intentions. Then there is greater likelihood that you will achieve what you aim for.

5. Persistence through the unknown

If you truly want to spark a movement, you must keep going even when the outcome is uncertain. You don’t know what the result will be, but you must commit to the process regardless.

The world, of course, needs progress in many areas. What movement do you hope someone (or you!) starts next? Can you explain why that is so important?

This world is a play of opposites. There is always room for people to do good things to take care of life on this planet.

Many problems are being caused by greedy people madly chasing money. Profit at any cost is devastating to our planet and to the souls of the perpetrators.

Solar power is now economically and fundamentally the best source of electricity. Solar power is less expensive than fossil fuels and nukes. Solar power is safe and clean. Solar power only requires initial installation and then it keeps on giving. Every government of every country, state, and city should be installing solar power on every roof and every neighborhood.

We need tree-planting movements to replace the thousands and thousands of trees being chopped down every day. We need non-toxic alternatives to synthetic chemicals. Synthetic chemicals are continuously degrading living conditions, and killing all types of life, all over the planet. We need to teach people how to handle their emotions and live peacefully. Art of Living Foundation is already doing extraordinary work in this area.

How can our readers follow you on social media?

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/daren-black-authorfindingrealyoga/>

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Thank you so much for these insights. It was a true pleasure to do this with you.