

Good afternoon Michelle and Erik,

First of all, I would like thank you very much for all that you do. You are helping to change lives that are longing for change! I also wanted to take time to sit down and write you both an email about my experience this past weekend.

Prior to arriving to the Chopra Center, I was skeptical of what my experience would be when I arrived. A good friend of mine had suggested this experience and persistently told me how it had changed him and helped him. I knew almost nothing about Meditation, Yoga, or Ayurveda but per Dave's recommendation I was willing to learn hoping it may have value and help me with my struggles. I never felt anxious about the trip details because the Vetitation staff did an amazing job maintaining communication throughout and ensuring everything would go smooth. That experience in itself was top notch.

When I arrived at The Chopra Center the first night, I was greeted by Erik and he showed us around and then helped us to get settled in. A few of us had the chance to meet for supper that evening, and that is when I already knew I was in good company. All I had to do from that point on was put myself in a mental state to get better. On Friday morning was when I first got the opportunity to meet the entire group and Michelle. I remember walking into the room and seeing the Back Jacks and Yoga mats thinking, "Oh great here it comes." Michelle started off in a powerful way allowing everyone time to walk around the room and analyze our surroundings. This in itself calmed me. It was as Michelle was teaching us breathing techniques, and talking us through new experiences, that I started to feel a shift. My brain was focused on the mission of getting better, and somehow I almost immediately went through a transition. I am normally a loud, talkative, and aggressive person. I try to find humor in all things to help me laugh and get through being uncomfortable. However, I went through an awkward transition where I immediately felt calm, quiet, and collected. I was not searching for humor or laughter; I just wanted more education and calmness. I craved it from the start. I felt a sense of belonging in the group, but for some unknown reason I strayed from the front of middle of it. I am NEVER the quiet reserved one, but I found myself engaging in minimal conversation, and actively seeking peace from everything around me. I spent 3 nights in my room for the first time in years falling asleep because I was comfortable and ready to get rest. Not because of a pill or my brain giving up and shutting down on its own. I slept too, it was amazing. I could wake up to the first alarm going off in the morning, and didn't search for the snooze button. I had a purpose again to get out of bed refreshed, and go to the next event.

This leads me to the Yoga. I am fairly fit physically, but this glorified stretching stuff really worked me. I enjoyed the motions and stretching of the Yoga, and although I was sweating heavily, and my ego was fairly uncomfortable, it was still relaxing. I want more, and I will continue to practice Yoga even back here at home. My chronic back pain received relief with the Yoga, and I was sort of comfortable sitting for long periods of time. I noticed between the Yoga and Meditation my body felt at ease more. My "twitches" were softer and more subtle.

Meditation! I was so scared and anxious walking back into the room with Michelle to receive my Mantra. I have a hard time focusing with one on one conversation. I was terrified that she was going to tell me some things that my mind would immediately reject and start shutting down. As I sat in the chair, I felt tense. Michelle then talked in a soothing and comforting voice explaining to me some things, and then sang a song for peace. As she sang I felt vulnerable and soft. I could tell my mind and body were willing to accept what was happening. Michelle then read me my Primordial Sound Mantra, and ensured that I understood it by having me repeat it. This was when I was directed to another room to practice meditation with my mantra for the first time. I remember walking in the room thinking, oh hell, what am I supposed to do, how do I do this. I found a seat on a couch, and just closed my eyes repeating my mantra to myself. The first couple minutes were tough. I had to fight off a lot of distraction coming through. Once I got focused, I felt at rest. It was a feeling I truly don't remember feeling. I felt zero weight from my body, my active mind, or any surroundings. I was truly at peace with my mantra in a state of pure relaxation. Michelle came back in to get me after sometime, and when I opened my eyes, I remember feeling new. Like all the things prior to the meditation were clear from my mind and body, and whatever happened after that was going to all be new. The group meditations produced the same effect for me each time we did them.

Vetitation is an amazing organization that has already began to change my life, and the results have been seen. Since I have been home, my wife has recognized that I seem present in our marriage for the first time in almost 13 years. I am focused and determined. The small stressful things in life are bothering me less and less with each one that appears. I am beginning to open up again, and becoming the talkative aggressive person, however, the conversation are more two sided. It's not about me and my story. I don't feel like I am shutting down conversations in my brain and thinking about the next mission. I am actively listening to others, and thinking before I interject or speak back. I am refreshed and feel healthy. I have not resorted to the energy drinks and coffee that consumed my daily diet. I am just as awake now with a sense of joy.

It is hard to put all of this into words, and I struggle with showing emotion. I hope I was able to express my deep gratitude to both of you through this email. I wanted to talk to both of you personally many times throughout the weekend, but could never get the courage to do so. I was afraid if I did, I may break down in tears, and appear weak and vulnerable. I know that is what needed to happen, but it is very hard for me. I will continue to talk about this amazing organization as much as I can. I am so grateful I was able to participate.

I will plan to continue communicating with both of you, and I would absolutely love the opportunity to serve Vetitation in any capacity they may need me to in the future. Please don't hesitate to reach out if I can assist. Again, thank you both so much for all you do, and have done for me. I hope you know you have truly changed my life, and given me tools to live a life I thought was gone for good.

Very Respectfully,

J