

My Corona Diary (unedited)

Beginning March 15, 2020 – December 29, 2021

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Who am I and why am I doing this?

My friendly name is Kathy Shea. Strangely, my whole name falls right out when people speak to or about me; I'm not "Kathy" or "Kathleen" but "Kathy Shea". I'm a 74-year-old, single, woman-identified woman; a long-time meditator following a spiritual path. I live alone and still work as a self-employed evaluator for behavioral health programs and am a former college administrator and faculty member. I am fully vaccinated and boosted, and I have NOT been infected with COVID-19 as of this date. I'm doing this because my paternal grandmother died during the pandemic. Her voice was silenced early, and I hope women's voices of this century's pandemic will not be lost as hers was. Her name was Louisa Wilhelmina Shea (nee Crowell).

This journal contains my spiritual musings, my rants over the response to COVID-19, some bits of poetry, often an update on the state of the pandemic in FL, and my 'take-aways' as there have been so many lessons not yet learned!

So here we go.....

Week 1 beginning March 15th - *Personal Decision* (also 40th anniversary of my father's death)

I chose self-quarantine on March 15th, (the Ides of March) because of my age, underlying medical conditions, and because I had been exposed to travelers. Most people are still coming and going everywhere, and many things are still open. I stopped going to the meditation center, my yoga class, and any stores except grocery and pharmacy. I have worked remotely for a long time, so I was able to continue with that. Week one brought uncertainty about daily routine and a sense of shock about how quickly the world could change. Doesn't everyone see what I see? Perhaps because the president says it will 'magically disappear'?

Week 2 beginning March 22nd - *The light I see at the end of the tunnel is a train coming toward us.*

I won't waste a word commenting on the "failures of government" at every level, so people are "doin' it for themselves" the best way they can. Hardly any testing, and FL Gov issin comentario!

I realized that I am very socially engaged, even if I am solitary. My form of *mansa seva* (service through the mind) has been to be that positive light with everyone I encounter, especially those I do not know. I engage through the eyes, a kind word, a smile. I know people receive those vibrations – they say things like “thank you for having such a positive attitude”, or “you are an angel” or “you’re my most positive client” and so forth. It’s not an ego thing, but a validation that my intentions are felt by those in my company for even a moment.

Everyone is – at best – worried and fearful. The psychological epidemic is also rising; the epidemic that, according to Dr. Phil, may kill more people than the pandemic itself. I have seen in myself an inability to concentrate for long periods of time, a forgetfulness (I locked myself out of my condo), sleep interruptions, hard time keeping to a schedule, and having many negative feelings toward some “leaders”. I would say I am disgusted by some of their actions.

Although I am enjoying Senior Shopping Day at the Winn Dixie grocery store, I am I VERY clear about the need to protect myself and my community by reducing to “0” the number of contacts I have and keeping my condo clean and clear of any contamination, i.e. virus-free. This means exceptional cleaning of both myself and my surroundings. I’ve renounced wearing jewelry or carrying a purse and wear only ‘wash and wear’ clothing. I’m mindful of avoiding anything that could become contaminated and bring the virus into my home. I’ve created a “sanitation station” inside the front door, where I can decontaminate everything before bringing it further inside. I open packages outside and boxes are immediately dispatched to the trash and the contents disinfected at my sanitation station. Unfortunately, being in a condo does not allow space outside for this purpose. I clean all the time and am living in an almost sterile environment. I’m spending more time planning meals, cooking, and trying to come up with a rigorous medication, meditation, exercise, work, play, and learn schedule during this time of isolation.

I have written 3 gratitudes each morning for years, and now I’m particularly grateful to the BKs for providing a sense of community and belonging during this time. For years I’ve believed “One World, One Family” and this pandemic proves the point. No one, no country, no group, no person, no corner of the world is immune to this virus.

I’ve noticed in myself a jitteriness related to the isolation; no one to share the burden, no one to watch my back, no one to help me. And a feeling of vigilance to the new ‘rules’ I have about cleanliness and so forth. These feelings can become extreme. Eckhart Tolle says, any time I feel that fear/anxiety, I have taken myself away from the present moment. Let’s breathe.....

Week Two has seen a flurry of activity as everything adjusts to a new way of doing things. The learning curve for Zoom is steep and it’s amazing how quickly everything has moved online and to working remotely. On one conference call with a federal agency, the project officer noted how “interesting” it is to run a whole federal agency from so many different locations, although his particular work is pretty much the same whether in the office or at home. The “workplace” will never be the same again.

The world was already slowing, but it stopped completely on March 27th when Dadi Janki left her body in Madhubhan, Global Hospital. We knew it had to come sometime, but for her to leave at this time was so perfect. She never wanted all the hoopla, and to leave when the whole world was stopped was just her style. I don't recall the exact date, but at Amrit Vela recently and before she left the body, Dadi popped into my meditation. She was a radiant angel; I only saw her face, but the smile was mesmerizing. Her drishti was so powerful, I could not look away although I was curious enough to try, just to see if the image would disappear. The pull was there even if my inner gaze was not. I had the distinct feeling she had come to say goodbye to me personally, and I was touched and amazed. Although I am not given to visions, I distinctly feel that I had one that morning. That subtle angelic image is burned in my memory, not the image of a frail, 104 year old yogini.

Takeaways from this week:

- Solitude is necessary for remembrance
- This is a time of re-assessment and "magnificent choices"
- Time to re-evaluate and proceed with caution
- Solidify my foundation

Week 3 beginning March 29th – *Doing nothing, doing everything*

(Wednesday, April 1, Conference Call with Ed Craft GPO/SAMHSA)

(Friday, April 3rd Ailyn C. test positive for Covid-19, had been sick for 7 days prior)

Feeling the frustration of the reorganization of my life and work. Feeling overwhelmed at trying to slow down and keep up at the same time. I understand that we are "all in the same boat", but frankly I would like to get out of the boat for a little while and stand on the beach, on dry land. I am zooming all over the place and sometimes there are 10 webinars per day to attend. It's not possible to keep up.

Biggest blessings are our daily morning class; and the classes, bhog offerings, and chitchats with Sr. Mohini. These things keep my attention and help me focus. Anchors to the day.

"The vision we have for each other will help us grow together." The paradox, as Craig said, is that "social distancing has brought us closer together." This is true for BKs, for my friends and work colleagues. Trying to go beyond the ruminations about What? Why? How? Sr. Mohini says that now the "biggest sound is the sound of our own thoughts." We BKs need to hear what time is saying, what God is saying, and what Dadi Janki is saying. This is very subtle, and I can't catch it if the sound of my thoughts is too loud.

Many BK classes and remembrances of Dadi Janki: Veronica shared that the "Best way to honor Dadi is to find that quality in her that I resonate with" and to emerge that in my own life. The

image of Dadi holding the globe comes to mind. I appreciate the magnitude of her surrender when she answered that call to be a world server. I imagine she could NOT imagine what was ahead for her. She became well known and loved around the world, but not a “celebrity” in the sense we understand today. So humble and so great!

Adopted my own methods to keep myself stable...Call AAA! (Acknowledge how I am feeling, Accept the situation as it is, and Activate myself in ‘doing’ something [even a positive thought] that can help bring peace.

Takeaways:

- There is Great Void in the physical world since Dadi Janki left
- Asking myself more questions about my role/my part now? Unresolved.
- Found myself wavering in my thoughts, and faith in my own fortune
- This is the new normal: be content with “what is”
- Fears and desires get in the way of contentment
- Took inspirations to help myself:
 - Twyla Tharp “Choose the Day” (If at the end of the day, I can say I spent time on things that I value, that make my heart full, that I have served the world...then I have chosen the day)
 - Sr. Mohini “Need less, use less”. “This is the time to receive answers from another dimension.”

Week 4 beginning April 5th (Palm Sunday, Holy Week): *Need less, Use less*

Holy Week brings a desire for solitude along with a somberness of past Easter memories and times gone by. Many memories of my family and my early days. Wondering why I am, how I am with respect to my aloneness. Emotional week as I worked on evaluations for STOPP and B-Care and zoomed all over the place.

Religious and spiritual themes point to “follow the Father”. I have learned that the (any) spiritual path goes through an intermediary to God the Father (Jesus, Brahma Baba, Mohamed, Buddha). Since it’s impossible to know a “human” God (as an incorporeal being, God does not have a physical body like humans do), we need to know and understand the qualities, the life and times, and the specific teachings, and the example set by a human being who is “close to the Father” and who does that work as God’s instrument. Jesus knew the Father and said he must be “about my Father’s business”. Brahma Baba surrendered his life, wealth, everything to be used to convey God’s self-introduction and directions for us. Similarly, Buddha and Mohamed each contributed pieces of the God-puzzle; that is the role of religious founders. In this awareness I enjoyed all the various religious services streamed from across the world. Stunning to see St. Peter’s Square and other holy places empty of pilgrims and yet so purely accessible in a very personal way.

**Week 5 beginning April 12th Easter Weekend, Madhubhan Experience Retreat:
*Ride the Wave***

(Wednesday, April 15, 2020, Conference Call with Kimberly Konkle, GPO/SAMHSA)

Attended online weekend retreat at Peace Village. All BK programs have moved online from across the globe. Hundreds joining in as the sustenance flows... Much tapasya and ongoing Bhatti's around the world. Unified Yoga started with global meditation by ALL BKs at 7:30 AM (EST). Drills and intense meditation and remembrances of Dadi Janki. Doing a VERY deep dive into myself.

- Become my own best friend and make every soul your friend.
- Everyone benefits from my ascending stage.

From our murli – follow the father. He teaches us to “perform actions, to be free of bondage, to fulfill the responsibility of karma, to be absorbed in love in my mind, to use everything in a worthwhile way....”

“When people are distressed, they feel tired.” I’m feeling a little sick....developing oral thrush. (Wonder if I have a very mild case of Covid-19?). Grateful that my symptoms are minor, yet systemic. Called the dentist who prescribed Nystatin swish and swallow. Started Rx on 4/15/2020 and have an emergency appointment to see her on 4/23/2020 to fix the veneer.

“Energy comes to you via your pure intention” (Veronica). I’m grateful that I have a comfortable place to quarantine. I’m grateful for Dadi Janki (a helper, an example of courage, a sample in every way), I’m eternally grateful for Sr. Mohini’s chit chats and the leadership and nurturance she is providing daily during the past month or more. The daily anchor of morning class with Miami BKs (and those who are quarantined here), is an absolute necessity...and “essential service”...during these times. Veronica has done a yeoman’s job of holding everyone close.

Enjoyed Holy Week and Easter Services from the Vatican and from the National Cathedral, as well as our BK offerings. A somber weekend made even more dramatic with visuals of the Pope in an empty St. Peter’s Square, and churches and cathedrals in full Easter mode without a “soul” in the church. Draws attention to our aloneness, yet togetherness. All the Easter messages were hopeful reminders of the serious inner work that must be done.

Best CC with GPO Kimberly Konkle. She is an excellent example of the expertise and depth of some government professionals. When asked how she is doing...”so much I cannot say”. She is predicting massive employee absences, spikes in suicides, and wants the evaluation to “scream the truth” about what’s going on here.

Week 6 beginning April 19th: 50th Anniversary of Earth Day: *Settling In, Getting Ready.*

(Monday, April 20, 2020, tele-med visit with Dr. Palmero via Facetime [my first] using this technology.)

(Tuesday, April 21, 2020, parking lot meetup with Patricia to exchange masks and other supplies.

(Tuesday Evening, April 21-22, trip to Urgent Care then ER for Ailyn, complaining of chest pain. Admitted to West Kendall Baptist Hospital for tests. Discharged next afternoon 4/22/2020)

(Thursday, April 23, 2020, emergency visit to Dr. Diamond to fix veneer on tooth.)

(Saturday, April 25, 2020, parking lot meetup to exchange supplies and “car talk”.

Feel I’m becoming a new person, and at the same time very aware of my old habits, beliefs, personality etc. Still in suspended animation.

Realized how being institutionalized affects the psyche. Just the process of going out makes me more oriented to time and place. Being home and mostly inside I lose track of time, dates, and tasks, even though I am working and trying to pay attention. Veronica commented today about how being “deliberate” about everything helps her stay focused and concentrated. I find that a useful technique. As the Buddhists say...when I eat, I eat....etc.

Attended an Earth Day Webinar hosted by Daniella Levine Cava – hopefully Miami-Dade County’s next Mayor. I learned about “climate gentrification” (high-ground property is now being purchased by wealthy domestic and foreign entities, pushing out the low-income communities living there.) So glad to see millennials in this movement taking such leadership.

Slowly sorting through boxes brought from storage last month. Weekend spent in sorting pictures was both enlightening and emotional. Learning many things about my parents and myself. I don’t recall being a happy-go-lucky child. I see that my mother was a social and happy teen...although in second grade she received checkmarks for courtesy...I can hardly imagine that....my mother was nothing if not courteous. Wonder what was going on in her life at that time? Saw the first pictures taken of me in March 1947...in my crib. Saw that my father took great pains to keep an album during those first 2 years. It did not look fun for my mother, who had to pack me up to go everywhere in those Chicago winters. Fortunate that we lived in Evanston where I was taken to the lakefront often during my first Spring and Summer. First pics of our new home in Morton Grove when I was just over 2 yrs. old, so I don’t remember any of the people in Evanston. Beautiful pics of Mrs. Thielman who a ‘stand-in’ for my godmother, Aunt Dot). Also pics and memorabilia of my father’s Army days: draft registration, army buddies, even a letter about a paycheck he did not receive. Not clear about the days when he

was hospitalized but remember the stories of my mother traveling across the country by train to South (?) Dakota to visit him.

I had a few bad hair days as an infant and appeared quite small. My mother was small, and I was told that I was breech..."I almost died having you, why would I want another child?" I wonder how she managed not to get pregnant...I think she must have turned my father away...I wonder if she worried about getting pregnant? She was 30 when she had me.

So very grateful for the sustenance coming from Sr. Mohini and the BK family worldwide. It is my anchor, my "go to" each morning and evening. I was having difficulty creating a new routine for myself, but Sr. Mohini says we don't need to "create" a routine, but just "follow" the timetable we are given. I have marveled at how the organization has adjusted in the month since Dadi Janki left. And energetically she has not gone, and her sustenance continues albeit in her angelic form. Dadi Gulzar is now the head of the organization, along with Sr. Mohini, Sr. Jayanti, Sr. Ratanmohini, and Dr. Nirmala.

Unified Yoga Bhatti each morning joins BKs worldwide in practicing the "drill" of becoming bodiless, self-sovereign, lost in love of the ONE, masters of the mind, angels, confluence-aged brahmins, and more. All of this is for our own preparation and capacity building. Each evening's meditation is for ourselves and for the world, sending rays of all the virtues to those who need Peace, Power, etc. The energy is palpable, and many experiences are being had in meditation. This is the time to receive those subtle signals, but true silence and soul-consciousness are needed for that.

Workwise, it has taken me twice as long to do half the work as usual. My concentration, focus, and attentiveness are scattered and although I don't watch too much news or ranting and raving, I am still greatly disturbed by what this "President" (ugh) continues to spew. I suppose it reflects my own "spewing" and just being silent does not silence the thoughts in my head. Many opportunities to practice putting a 'full stop' to those thoughts... I have a lot of work to do in this regard.

Week 7 beginning April 26th: *Staying Introverted*

Reinventing myself in ways unknown to me. Just following the timetable as much as possible, and applying "Triple A" - Acknowledge, Accept, Activate to get me through the day. Today, Monday April 27th I acknowledge that I am still feeling in suspended animation, not with my feet on the ground. I am anxious, vigilant, sometimes judgmental about young people who are so careless about following recommendations for distancing and wearing masks, feeling very tired. My heart aches for those in other places who are having trouble getting food or medical help. Sleep schedule has gotten out of whack and I have a sty in my eye probably from touching my eyes while going through boxes. My goal for this week is to get eating and sleeping in better alignment, and to "catch up" with things on my desk.

Scheduling my day has ALWAYS been a challenge and NOW is the time to get a handle on things. Following the BK timetable helps:

Amrit Vela	4:00-4:30 AM
Class and Unified Bhatti	6:00 – 7:45 AM
Breakfast	8:00 – 9:00 AM
Writing, Ballet, Voice Exercises	9:00 -11:00 AM
Karma Yoga/Office Hours/Meetings	11:00-1:30 PM
Lunch/Main Meal	1:30-2:30 PM
Rest/Read/Webinars	2:00 – 4:00 PM (or required webinars)
Tea break/Review and Respond	4:00 – 6:00
Evening Bhatti	6:00 – 7:30
Snack, prepare for bed	8:30 – 10:30
Disinfect, shower, meds	

Week 8 beginning May 3, 2020: *Don't let this time slip by....*

The week slipped by and I did not journal. What did I do? Mostly worked, zoomed, videoed, emptied boxes...

Enjoyed the Yagya Experience with Sr. Mohini; ballet class; cooking and cleaning.

Week 9 beginning May 10, 2020: *"Svaha¹...(well said/so be it)."*

Concluding 14 days Bhatti (commemorating the 14 years of solitude) that the original founders of the Brahma Kumaris experienced. In a virtual puja, we said "Svaha" and sacrificed the subtle – and not so subtle things – that hold me back. Trade all of that "for victory on the basis of faith. Become a master bestower of support. Help uplift others – step away from waste. Be victorious with faith so others can look at you and know God....Faith develops into "trust". Trust comes because you used faith and had victory. Intellect is based on knowledge; trust comes from the heart. (Sr. Mohini)

Thinking about leadership and the absence of it from our "leaders"...The practical proof of leadership is that people follow.

¹ Whenever fire sacrifices are made, svāhā is chanted. Etymologically, the term is probably from su, "well" and the root ah, "to call". ... It is **said** that the gods to whom offerings are being made through yagna refuse the offerings unless the word '**svaha**' is uttered during the sacrifice (Wikipedia)

Qualities of Dadi Janki: such a big heart, tolerance, took others beyond with just a glance; she researched every virtue and power; went to the bottom of the ocean of experience because she was introverted. Takeaway: become introverted to have deep experiences.

Beautiful Experience in United Yoga: Was taken by Brahma Baba to Baba's rock, where I understood that he had visions. Lots of children around him; I understood that we are "going home" with him now. The reality is that lots of souls are leaving now...almost 100,000 Americans alone.

Charting my "angel experience": A Knowing: Need to do less, Feeling free of worldly supports, making my own plan. We souls have recognized ourselves. Go to the subtle region with the 3rd eye. New BK program "Live as an Angel; Serve as an Angel."

The intellect has to be detached to catch the signals. Everyone is getting more accurate.

Homework: At AV take one quality of Baba and accumulate that quality. Don't have too many thoughts; deal with things quickly; don't get stuck, stop; don't be afraid.

Week 10 beginning May 17, 2020: *Wearing down and Re-opening*

While many folks are doing the happy dance as things start to re-open, I am wearing down. This has taken a big toll on my body...the body feels every emotion. The mind reacts to the isolation. The challenges become bigger even as I sit in the comfort of my condo. I find myself slipping into a negative cycle...all the things I tossed into the fire have come back in flames to bite me one last time. We, the (elderly, vulnerable) people are now the "expendables" who will have to "sit out" the comeback while millennials who think they are not at risk are willing to sacrifice our lives to have their "comeback." It is painful to think of myself now as sidelined until I get sick and die.

Beautiful "angel experience" this week while lying on my yoga mat, watching a storm roll in at sunset, feeling fortunate in my mind, body, and soul. Eating the fruit of the Confluence Age. At home and watching the drama from such a protected and comfortable environment; easily pulled into meditation.

Found the pictures of the "holy swans" we took in Maine...I am a happy and holy swan; constant inner happiness without support; happiness is in my DNA. It is my duty to do service.

Logging my "small wins" over these weeks (so far):

1. Getting to know myself better; reminding myself over and over "Everyone has to make their own decisions."
2. Establishing a new morning routine for meditation, class, unified yoga, voice exercises, out-loud reading, breathing/ballet/yoga (and breakfast).
3. Changing my expectations for myself.

4. Finding a form of exercise that I love (ballet).
5. Tending tenderly to my balcony plants.
6. Staying put; stopped all running around.
7. More deliberate with everything.
8. Cooking creatively.
9. Belonging to the big BK family.

Veronica interviewed Asha (Delhi) and Ken (Brazil): Asha talked about “nij gyan” (original knowledge) being contained in three Oms (why Dadi used these three). Practice “I am a soul.” This has to be understood. Three dots: God, Me (I am a soul), Drama – This is nij gyan.

Ken said “We have been thrust upon our souls”. We have to reduce drama to a point. We have to deal with ourselves, and those close to us karmically.

V: What do we have to give people now? Asha: from nij gyan, heir quality souls are born. As the tree grows, the twigs become weaker. Ken: work on the experience of the soul and soul world. All religious activity is a reflection of nostalgia to go back to God.

From the Retreat: I am moving toward increasing my powers and qualities. Feelings and thoughts get affected, leading to waste thoughts, and then a loss of self-respect, then trying to build a “logic” to justify / explain something.

Sr. Mohini – Instruments have to be two steps ahead in experiencing and practicing.

Judy Johnson inquiry:

1. **What 3 things do I know about my future because I am experiencing them NOW?**
 - a. Introversion
 - b. Enthusiasm/Happiness
 - c. Purity/Cleanliness/Disinterest
 - d. Appreciation and Harmony with Nature
2. **Two things I practice NOW that keep me connected to my future?**
 - a. Reflection and keeping a chart
 - b. Becoming simple (no jewelry, quietness)
 - c. Keeping the image of Simple and Subtle in front of me
3. **One thing I will take away to support myself.....???**

Week 11 beginning May 24, 2020: *Relaxing and Reopening... Hope or Hype?*

Monday, May 25th, George Floyd murdered by police in Minneapolis. Demonstrations begin.

Thursday, May 28th, “relaxed my vigilance” and did my monopoly squares

Friday, May 29th, “relaxed my vigilance” went to AD Barnes Park for a walk.

Saturday, May 30th, SpaceX successful launch

Saturday, May 30th, Patsy Kennedy died 7 pm.

I started the week grateful for the poincianas, my spiritual life and study, and my simple life these days. Then – once again – another Black man fell victim to police brutality, setting off demonstrations and protests. I ended the week on the high note of the SpaceX launch and I crashed back to earth with the news of Pat Kennedy’s passing later than evening. And this is the “new normal.”

So reminiscent of the 60s...reminds me of the summer of ’68. I think it will be a HOT summer in many ways. This is the confluence of Economic, Social, and Political factors that come together in a perfect storm. This is the stuff that “movements” are born of. My inclination is to join the protesters but will join in spirit for now. This will have to play out.

Veronica noted that there is the implication that “there can’t be a human resolution to these things”. Peace, Justice, Reconciliation.

Memorial Day Retreat @ PV: the Joy of the Journey. Then Teachers’ Retreat: “Resilience and Reinvention.” Beautiful interview/stories with senior BKs (Ken, Maureen, Enrique, Aruna, Sharona). Honest appraisals and stories of their journeys...not always “joyful” as the title suggests. Sharona keeps returning to the notion of “commitment” as what’s needed now...

“Add to the beauty of things with your thoughts..” What specialty do I bring to every task? What attitude, quality, thoughts do I bring...?”

New series starting with Sr. Mohini...on Purity...of the senses, in the mind and intellect.

Definitely notice that when I let my disciplines slip – even a little – it’s a slippery slope to anxiety, judgementalism, negativity, etc...the vicious downward spiral/cycle. Things and people are dropping away from holding my interest...

Have logged some additional “small wins”

1. Starting each day with a positive email to someone
2. Limiting news viewing to 30 min or less. Mostly just get headlines online. selecting a very few people to follow on social media
3. Gone back to PT
4. Attended every MCB class on Saturdays and Mondays
5. Cleaned 2 closets – 2 more to go

Saturday morning the good news of the SpaceX launch was enlivening. Watching the clarity and the beauty of the launch brought hope for America’s ingenuity and striving toward the future. Then the evening, May 30th: another light goes out. Had a private memorial: this time

for Pat Kennedy. She was an influencer, before it was fashionable to be one. She was simple and straightforward, had the BEST light attitude of anyone I know...while keeping laser focused on her aim and objectives. Her smile belied her physical conditions. She was victimized in some ways by her treatment for breast cancer which set off so many complications later in her life. She was a joy to know.

Had many thoughts about the “re-opening” even as the number of Covid cases and deaths are increasing in FL. Definitely no “flattening” despite the hype. Basically they are fudging the numbers...testing, “but not that much”...not testing in hotspots like nursing homes, jails, detention centers, and other congregate living and working spaces. Makes FL look better than it is. On the other hand, Miami (other FL urban areas) benefit from less urban density, poor public transportation, and fresh air.

I ‘relaxed’ and tested myself on a full day of doing my “squares” – only the necessary things but exhausting nonetheless: PO, Pharmacy, Grocery, Ironing. It requires a lot of energy and vigilance to be in public. Hardly worth the effort.

“Relaxed” and took myself to AD Barnes Park. Arrived around 9:15 AM and walked the nature trail. Most everyone had masks (except kids playing hoops and exercise moms doing squats and lunges.) I could see how things have grown without human interruption. It was lovely, but at times hard to walk with a mask. Nevertheless, I will try it again.

More small wins:

1. All closets cleaned and straightened. Because I was looking for a special pic of Pat Kennedy (which I never found), I finally sorted through all my closets. Still have many things, but if I die everything in the mirrored closet can just be thrown out. If I live, I will enjoy many projects, photos, writing and study themes for years to come!
2. Hurricane supplies are becoming complete with the addition of a battery-operated fan, camping stove, small propane canisters, and staples.
3. Made a delicious Peace Pie from fresh peaches. I think my cooking has improved 😊

Week 12 beginning May 31, 2020: *Revisit the foundation.*

Saturday, June 6th, Pat Kennedy’s online funeral

Sunday, June 7th, visit to NEO

How easily we are influenced. Fear rises when I think that harm will come to me. This is the essential question of re-opening. Am I safe? Can I stay safe? So many BIG things are happening: Demonstrations, Protests, Racism, Economic troubles, Stock Market (fickle mistress to the economy) (rising) Unemployment, Presidential Callousness, Black Leaders speaking out, Black Women Rising....and of course the Pandemic is still with us (now an endemic)

Our foundations need to be revisited. Accumulate power now. Listen to an original class each morning and connect with the roots.

Sr. Mohini is making effort to be sure we BKs have the right foundation. Thus, clarifying history of the organization, focus on “nij gyan”, encouraging increasing our love for God, making people feel valued and that they belong. Sr. Mohini is focused on BKs...many other programs focus on different topics, but she is focused on US.

Reminder of Dadi Janki's 3 words: Honesty, Cleanliness, Simplicity.

- Honesty: Vast subject. Honesty in relationships with the self, Baba, money, others. Do I have 100% honesty? Truth comes in honesty.
- Cleanliness: am I free from subtle desires and things for the self (name, recognition, etc.)? There is “DUST” (influences, opinions, listening to anything and everything – i.e. wasteful things. “I read...” “I heard...” “I think...” and “RUST” from my sanskars, impressions left on me.
- Simplicity: “I don't need brains, I need heart”...i.e. not to interpret God in my own way. When there is purity you come to know God as He is. Have a simple nature.

Use the intellect I have been given, but not just for myself. Use intellect to get Truth, Power, Simplicity. Have simple living, internal simplicity. Ok, I'm not perfect, but how will my NEXT moment be?

Diane Tillman starting a mental health program for BKs...helping people to develop “beauty and harmony in relationships”. Based on Living Values, she encourages us to reflect on “what helps me take care of me”. Rx: Meditation, Exercise, be with yourself and give to nature, Sleep (am I getting enough sleep for MY body?), Emotions, Plate too full? Bottom line: create a nurturing space for myself and others.

Veronica asked: “What is in the head of a brahmin?” Is there a vision of a/my/the future? “Take precautions to protect yourself and others but your spirituality should not be masked.” A lot of things are in my head these days...not always so positive.

B encourages us to “pay attention” to the pilgrimage of remembrance. I am receiving my inheritance of knowledge (and to what extent have I become a “messenger”?).

Sit in solitude, talk to myself, practice being a detached observer and see each one's part. Don't become confused. “Baba comes and completely changes us.”

Week 13 beginning June 7, 2020: *The Art of Adjusting Myself*

Monday June 8, Patricia's birthday, and a lunch visit

Tuesday, June 9th, Marilyn Vigiletti's funeral (Chgo)

Thursday, June 11th, Pride Interview with BMC's Emus Hernandez

Thursday, June 11th, Teach-In at FIU online

Friday, June 12th, Drive-by to deliver painting to AC

Starting the week with a celebration for Patricia's birthday. A blessed time for her to refresh herself while her sister takes care of mamita. Enjoyed the tech upgrade, a vacation trip down memory lane and a nice luncheon.

Much self-reflection about my own implicit biases, and feeling very sad about my own complacency in this regard. After all, I worked in this field for many years...realized that once I got going in my career, I, like so many others, got distracted from these issues. Time to renew my commitments, albeit in a new way. Not sure yet what that will look like. As Dev commented, he can see me in a white sari holding a protest sign that says "Be Soul Conscious"! I laugh at the thought of that sight!

The FIU teach-in was sobering.

1. I see the pain in the eyes of the Black Ancestors in the USA, and yet they persisted. Hymns, hard labor, violence. No more "Black History"...this is "American History"
2. White privilege is ME...I am what white privilege looks like even though I am / was middle class
3. The only response to humiliation is humility...the nonviolent way. Yet, I see how important it is to keep the movement going.
4. So many brilliant Black writers – I am enriched by the words of Howard Thurman...how did I not know of him?

Work continues to pick up. I am challenged by the federal GPO to "scream the truth" in my reporting.

A busy week work-wise and venturing outside a bit. Did a 15 min driveway visit with AC. She looks good and I'm reminded of her kindness and innocent heart.

Spent the weekend (finally) getting my personal 2019 tax backup ready and off to the accountants (whew!).

Week 14 beginning June 14th 2020: *The Big Gap Between Intention and Accomplishment*

Wednesday, June 17th, early meetup with Patricia at Fairchild for "seniors and vulnerable"

Wednesday, June 17th, planted "Greenstalk" herb garden with 9 herbs & green bean seeds.

Thursday, June 18th, all day HHRN summit / zoom

Saturday, June 20th, New iPhone 11 and visit to NEO

I started the week with great intentions: “Today I begin a new disciplined life: checking and changing any negative thoughts; relaxing into an easiness (no desires, just appreciation and peacefulness); using my specialties, whatever they are.”

Great intentions...but little progress toward accomplishment. The gap between intention and accomplishment is “Implementation” (and important notion for my evaluation work) and “dharna” for my spiritual life.

Have “upgraded” my tech devices to be able to participate and contribute in my work and with online activities. My devices were old...failing me in many ways. The spiritual “upgrade” is also needed to do the same thing: participate and contribute to a better world and to claim my own place in it.

Taking care of my physical self means having the “preparedness” to sustain myself for a long period of time if need be. I am ready: 3 months of meds, close to having 3 yrs. worth of cash to sustain me, started a garden, upgraded tech, reviewed budget. Sr. Mohini urges us to take a look at our budget, not just \$\$, but time, other resources, thoughts, etc. Need less – use less. Still, I have a lot to simplify. From the murli “Don’t sulk” and by doing so, did I reject God and my inheritance?

Veronica noted the “less sorrow I have in me, the less I will complain about others. Have pure and positive thoughts for everyone. I find that hard to do sometimes, so at least I can have a kind attitude towards everyone, and remind myself I am a soul and only see the soul.

- Herb garden brings freshness into my eating (I will do yogic gardening”)
- Financial \$ budget is subsistence now but I have all I need without denying myself
- Time is “invested” (not spent”): in spiritual study and meditation 4 hrs./day; working 3hs/day; exercising 30-60 min/day; learning/reading/writing 1 hr./day.....on average...

The HHRN summit was illusion-busting:”

1. There is not a county in the country where someone on minimum wage could afford a 2 br apartment. What’s a family to do?
2. The best treatment for every condition is HOUSING

Week 15 beginning June 21st, 2020: “What aspects of knowledge are you applying now?” and “The Quest for a Test”.

Sunday, June 21st, Father’s Day, International Day of Yoga, Summer Solstice, Solar Eclipse, BK World Peace Meditation and Amar’s birthday!

June 25th Antibody Test at MD Now

June 26th, Covid test at Marlins Park

June 26th MCB gala (online)

June 27th Desert Rose concert (online)

The week begins “auspiciously” with all these significant events. Learned that Father’s Day in the USA began in honor of a single father who raised 14 children. Hosted a BK program with Craig Gorden (father, grandfather, yoga teacher, dance instructor, meditator, and more), “A Father’s Journey”. Not too many people seem to view the BK programs “live” but at least we are contributing to the public conversation, not to mention adding the vibrations of silence and peace to the world.

While recording a session to be shown on Facebook Live, Meeta’s question stopped me completely: “What aspects/points of knowledge are you applying right now?” Recognizing that I was coming from a social justice frame, not a spiritual frame, she asked just the right question. We will follow up on that theme in conversation this week!

The Quest for a Test (put to rest on Friday June 26th)

I see the Covid numbers surging, not unexpectedly, and decided to get myself tested. Blanca also feeling unwell this week and so invited her to come with me. My Quest for a Test led me everywhere and I have concluded that it’s not that easy to get tested. The County operates 3 large testing sites; logistics handled by the Army, and swabbing by who knows? I’m sure the health department is involved somehow. Process neither easy nor difficult if one has access to a computer, can read and follow instructions, and has infinite patience. Five days out, I still don’t have results. Antibody testing at MD Now (June 25th), a local urgent care center...easy as a knife through butter. And No Charge. Copays waived. Also accidentally registered and received a home test kit from LabCorp. I will save it for a future test.

Overall, my labs are good. A1c is 5.7 and needs to come down. Everything else is as good as can be. Going back on WW to lose those 5 Covid pounds that I have gained. Stiffness is main problem...Cynthia helps with that each week. Main goal is to lose weight and stay loose! A Feldenkrais session, courtesy of Patricia, helps with that.

A weekend of beauty! Friday night the Miami City Ballet Gala (online). I’ve never been to a ballet gala and this was a thrill. Special surprise interview with Choreographer Twyla Tharp and performance of her ballet “9 Sinatra Songs”. Saturday night the exquisite vocals of Desert Rose. They are an interesting duo. He, a Muslim/Sufi; she a white South African composer/pianist. World music at its best. The meditative sound of their music and his vocals especially are so soothing and healing. Their aim is a global healing and they are doing just that.

“Violet Jane” – baby shower online (June 27th) – What fun! Especially watching Bill try to guess the baby food flavors. That child will be secure and loved and well taken care of.

It was such an uplifting weekend.

Week 16 beginning June 28th, 2020: *High Anxiety: The ‘Too Late’ Sign is Going Up*

June 30th Funeral for PC’s uncle in MA

This is the best of times and the worst of times...Apologies to Dickens.

Began the week at the B-Care Huddle with clinicians. Happy to see and hear them all doing well. Very proud of each of them. Talked to Ailyn...good wishes....she is struggling I think... Blanca not too well...Funeral for Patricia’s uncle.....and it’s only Wednesday.

I don’t write about it each week, but Sr. Mohini’s consistent sustenance has been massive. She holds each and every one of us with compassion and love, and at the same time guides us. She is my most trusted source these days. She has been the perfect instrument, both human and divine. What would I be doing without the knowledge I’ve gained over the past 26 years? I’ve always thought the BKs had something special and unique to offer: The “8 Postures of the Heart” and the “Masterclasses” are IT! These represent the ‘opening of the curtain’. It’s as if all BKs have been playing their parts on the stage, but the curtains were closed, and so no one could see the performance. Now, with these two programs, the curtains are opening, and the performance is available for all to see and it is so very beautiful.

Regarding the virus, FL has seen a big surge in cases....in Miami-Dade County this past week has revealed 2K-9K new cases per day. We have no capacity for testing, tracing, isolating, and there is just “too much virus” as Dr. Fauci said recently. There is nothing we can do at this point to stop the spread short of a major / total lockdown for at least 1 month and there is no political will to do that. So the “too late” sign is up! The Gov has chosen ‘herd immunity’ as his strategy. He even admitted that stretching cases over a long period of time will help hospitals! What insanity! Millions will become sick, and thousands more will die. And how is THAT good for the economy? And Tourism? FL has been described as a “plague ship”like in the early days of the AIDS epidemic, FL was the place to go when you didn’t give a ^&%%\$#E ... it took many deaths and a huge education/prevention campaign to get men to wear condoms and people to be concerned about the spread of the HIV virus. We are still working on that 40 years later and despite easy, affordable, and widespread testing and treatment leading to viral suppression, there are many new cases discovered each day.

Feeling agitated and over-stimulated this week with work and worry. No empty spaces in my mind these days. Using substances – comfort foods- to calm myself. Binging on my desire for social justice. I am an addict in many ways.

Sr. Mohini has been sharing about the original and eternal qualities of the soul. Veronica says “focus on the original qualities and the virtues will automatically come.” My original quality is Peace by this week my body is peaceless....full moon agitation/migraine, anger. Even though I don’t want to give anyone or anything the privilege of upsetting me, I upset myself with the own thoughts. As Veronica says “What does it take for people to value each other?”

4th of July concert by Lucinda was such a great gift. There is nothing like her music in a meditative state. So uplifting and soul-filling. My body was treated to a Feldenkrais session to release “MS angry hips.” Amazingly, the next morning my right hip was much better!

Week 17, beginning July 5th, 2020: “Just live with it”

July 5-10 Every Day is a Poem course

July 7th PT visit

July 10th visit to NEO

After a week of record-breaking new Covid cases in FL, we are now the leader of a growing number of epicenters. Here’s what I’ve learned this past week about Miami-Dade County: 1) JMH now has TWICE the number of hospitalized Covid patients that they had at the previous peak in April; 2) Remdesivir – the leading therapeutic - is in short supply in FL (shall we say ‘gone’?); the old dumpy Pan Am Hospital has been opened for post-acute Covid patients to make room at JMH (half of the 130 beds were filled in 1 day); 3) FL may be holding back on reporting Covid cases; 4) herd immunity (what DeSantis wanted all along) won’t work either because immunity doesn’t last long enough; 5) it is reported that there are 1600 contract tracers in (we would 5 or 6 times that number)hahahhaahhahhahhhahah.....and that an “epidemiologist” will call when a positive case is report to the DOH.....hahahahahhahahah (☺)))))). Larkin proudly boasts 60 tracers and they have been recruiting for months. And BTW, they have actually been trained.

But most of all I learned that NOBODY CARES. So, we sit and watch Rome burn now. And take care of our own selves... words like “freefall” and “catastrophic” are now being used.

For this and other political reasons, I fear we are headed toward anarchy as the summer heats up!

On a “Positive” note – my Covid test was Negative. Results delivered in 9 days. While the 200 positive people in my “cohort” (1000 x 20%) were out and about for 9 days infecting others....So from that small sample - 200 positives infecting only 2 people per day for 9 days....is 3600 directly infected....and the beat goes on.....and if those 3600 infect 2 people.... Although the

rate of transmission is higher than that, I believe...it's a LOT of folks just from the June 26 testing site at Marlins park.

Today is Tuesday, July 7th.....and just today Gov Desantis says our County is "hard hit"....whhhhaaaaaaat did he say? The only reason he showed up in Miami for a love-fest with Mayor Gimenez is because the national news media has positioned him as a total incompetent...and he and Gimenez have to keep things in Trump's new home state very pretty. Makes me SURE that we need to keep speaking – no, "screaming" the Truth about what is happening here. The fact is that today...our positivity rate is above 26%....vs NYC which is 2% today. Our hospitals have reached urge surge capacity...the TV ad should be "what if you needed to go in the hospital...sorry" vs. The attack ad on Joe Biden about police defunding.

My head is exploding and talking to me is like listening to the news...I am crazy with anger, rage, disbelief and the urgent NEED to keep talking. By my spiritual measure, I am missing the mark. Do I not know that everything is accurate? Do I forget what the drama is all about? But I feel SILENCE IS VIOLENCE. I recall talking with Liza Haddad in Jan 2017 at a retreat in Anubhutti.....about Trump and the state of this country. She knew what she was talking about having gone thru this in Iran...and by the time you "get it", she said, "It's too late." Well Liza, you are correct. It's too late. But still, the only thing left to do is NOT to be silent...it's the silent majority that facilitated the holocaust, and the Iranian takeover. And now, here we are....about to descend into anarchy.

I have been troubled all week by ice pick headaches. I know full well that the full moon, not sleeping well, being "irapotatoed", and having too many thoughts in my mind/head brings this on. Moving again to turn this around. "Every Day is a Poem" course this week helped me focus and stay in the Now. I learned about finding awe in things right around me, finding my purpose, honing my intentions, and some of the fundamentals of good poetry. Here is my first exercise in finding awe. Looking around the room, my eyes fell on Ailyn's painting...finding it awesome!

BIRTH

I am in Awe of Ailyn's painting.

Colored waters of pain, struggle, optimism spill out from the womb

A new world crowns as a baby's head might emerge into the open hands of the midwife

The blue sky is like a swaddling blanket holding fields of goldenrod to surround the mother

As she holds the newborn world in her hands.

Many emotions and tears surround the news, my poems, the hurt and sorrow people are experiencing now...yet I am among the fortunate few who have everything I need; a job, a place

to live, a spiritual community, friends, and pretty much every convenience. I am the picture of white privilege. I have a first - class cabin on the "Plague Ship Florida".

Week 18 beginning July 12th, 2020: *The Shift: Preparations for a new world*

July 14th – began Exquisite Exchanges with my future self.

July 14th – PT visit

July 15th – Facebook Live session with Meeta

After a week of terrible news about the virus skyrocketing across the USA, but particularly in the South and West (and in many of the "red states" governed by Republicans who have been following the non-leadership of the President), I am turning my attention to the future. But first a brief recap of where we are virus-wise here in Miami-Dade County and in politics.

1. Despite the "data dodge" as Michelle Gillen has termed it, we have approx. 270K cases a/o 7/11/2020. Estimates suggest we could have 10x that # or 2.7 MM cases. The number of new FL cases has tripled in a span of 2 weeks: 6/28/2020 (5,380) to 7/11/2020 (15,299).
2. Positivity rates (a leading indicator) are increasing. This increase is NOT due simply to more testing as some would claim, but actually is indicative of more Virus. FL positivity rate is about 12% while Miami-Dade's positivity rate varies between 23 and 30% on any given day. If we were doing so well (as some would like us to think), as the number of tests increased, the positivity rate would go down.
3. Death rates (lagging indicator) are going up

The Trump administration has dispatched administration officials to the Sunday shows today to send This Message: "Yes, we have increases...but..."

1. It's better than before because we are more prepared (the truth in Miami is we are at surge capacity hospitals, shortages of PPE, long lines for testing, no contact tracing...???)
2. We have remdesivir, antibiotics, and other treatments...and yes we have ventilators (really?)
3. If you are hospitalized, you are less likely to die (see #2 above)...like playing Russian roulette...

And this is the best news they can give? Schools, teachers, and parents are not really buying it....no matter how loud the message. We still have no plan, no execution, no leadership, no efforts to do more than spin the message. Trump is in the final days of his Presidency...and the destruction of the USA is nearly complete.

So with that backdrop, I look ahead to “Exquisite Exchanges with my Future Self,” the latest in the BK series of programs and classes that have kept us together and moved us ahead – together.

July 12: “The Yogi Life of Manmohini Didi”: such beautiful remembrances by Mohini Didi. I did not know much about her, but now we know of her great love for God, for Baba, and her great humility despite her great capacity.

From the murli: Souls should experience Peace in whatever way possible. Be an altruistic server; speaking through the mind in words. Like giving O2 and enabling them to take a breath of Peace. Become a Peace House; try to tell them about soul conscious peace in a few words – clarify the meaning of Peace. “Angels of Peace will be revealed.” “Contentment is the easy way to spirituality; cheerfulness is the easy way = embodiment of all attainments. Contentment is the proof of knowledge. There is a lack of contentment when I am incomplete.” 3/12/84 is a murli on contentment.

Doing the “Exquisite Exchanges” with the Miami BK class each morning (14 in all). Really lovely meditations, contemplations, and exchanges (with myself and others). Highlights from the first few exchanges.

DAY 1: Future World

- My way of seeing will make something happen.
- “We are sitting in the early days of daybreak.” (Dadi Prakashmani)
- Suffering is the stimulus to bring people closer...to God.
- “These are the days of the dawn...” Have a clear vision of it.
- Experiences are closer than ever now...you can see the trees of heaven.
- World is cleansed
- “Heaven” emerges: “Paradise”, “Garden of Allah”, “Satyug”, “Age of Truth”, “Golden Age”, “Land of Immortality”
- I live eternally, abundantly, filled with treasures, orderly and harmoniously with the laws of nature
- Perfect systems
- Now I am in my home – still, full of potential, unconscious, close to my Father.

To My Future World

You stand ready and waiting for me

Already there, if only I could see it

I hear the morning songs of the birds

I touch the soft grass - new, supple, dewy

I smell the earth beneath the grass – uncorrupted, full of nutrients to support the plants, rich, fecund

I taste freshness, sweetness, cleanliness in everything - Nothing is bitter or sour

Tart or savory ... but never bitter or sour.....

To prepare myself for this world, each day I will remove all sourness or bitterness, or rigidity, or jealousy, or harsh talking (singing only songs of wonder). I see glimpses in everything now. I experience awe in these glimpses.

The new world in a glimpse.

DAY 2: The Womb

- Peace - descending from my home to the Palace of a Womb
- Quiet, love-full, aware of cells forming around my tiny soul
- Infinite love
- Noticing the dichotomy; physical and non-physical
- Focused on feeling
- Deep in the ocean
- Awe beginning to develop
- Consciousness of the body
- I resist the thought of coming out, yet I must
- I meet my parents for the first time.

NB – I had difficulty with this visualization – perhaps because of never having had the birth experience. What did I miss in this lifetime?

DAY 3: Happiness of Daily Routine - “Waking Up”

- The state of being awake and asleep are equal - only difference is the eyes are open or closed
- Was there a time I woke w/o tiredness? Yes, when getting up early to go on vacation, and when in Madhubhan. What was that feeling?

Week 19 beginning July 19th , 2020:

What was I doing? Why didn't I write?

Week 20, beginning July 27th , 2020:

What was I doing? Why didn't I write?

Week 21, beginning August 3rd, 2020:

What was I doing? Why didn't I write?

Week 22, beginning August 10th, 2020:

What was I doing? Why didn't I write?

Week 23, beginning August 17th, 2020: *"The Soul of our Nation": An Unconventional Convention*

August 17-20th: Democratic National Convention

For four years, I have been looking forward to the Democratic National Convention. Actually, I ALWAYS look forward with great enthusiasm to all the conventions. My first convention involved crashing the 1956 Republican National Convention in Chicago with my parents. I was 8 years old and they were Democrats. I crashed the Republican convention again in 1964 at age 17, and by then, I was able to take some photos. I turned 21 and voted for the first time in 1968. I was part of the youth movement that lobbied to lower the voting age (which was accomplished in 1971). In 1968, I was in Grant Park as the Democratic National Convention careened into a melee. And my political activism was solidified.

I love the speeches and even the boring parts like the rules committee meetings and the long, long roll call. But this year, I was yearning, longing for hope, for decency, for light, for strength, for intelligence, for thoughtfulness, for openness, for comfort, for safety, for wisdom, for leadership, for newness, for lessons well-learned, for lightness, for some fun, for young bright happy faces, for unity, for togetherness. I was yearning to see and feel the Soul of America and I was not disappointed.

Week 24, beginning August 24th, 2020:

Republican National Convention (1 day): *"Trump Pageant"* ☹️

Nothing to say.....



Week 25, beginning August 31st, 2020: "Accept Everything; Control Nothing"

August 30th – Miami Rakhi for contact souls; start 3-day experiment...

September 1st – financial update with John Posey; execute will and estate docs

September 2nd – SAMHSA GPO – "...you seem to be doing great...I hear real despair out there."

September 3rd – AIJ messaging meeting: "We are Lawyers....our direct service is the basis for our litigation work...changing many lives."

This was the "week that was"...full of little trials and tests and new resolve. Shireen offered a challenge during her talk at the Miami BK Rakhi program for contacts; that is to understand and accept the "Grand Epic Drama called 'What Is'." To try for 3 days to "accept everything and control nothing." I want to do this AND embed Manda's challenge to "be honest with time". So for three days I'll track myself hourly at traffic control to record how I spend the last hour. At the end of the day, I'll review and see if I am honest w/ time or am I wasting time? Am I fulfilling God's hopes in me? Am I serving?

Day 1 – Tues, Sept 1st.

4 – 4:45 am Amrit Vela

5:00 – 8:00 am Dress, meditation, murli, eat breakfast, prep for lunch/main meal

8:00-10:00 am Service AC, start laundry

10:00-11:00 take short break, finish laundry, answer texts

11:00-12 noon Finish cooking, check internet (none), chop veg to freeze

- 12:00 – 2:35 Water plants, sweep balcony, cook rice, make buddha bowl for lunch, prepare for conference call with John Posey, review will and other docs, check UBS account balances
- 2:35 – 4:35 Go to PO to pick up mail, go to Notary (not enough witnesses present), stop for diet coke at McD's (listened to Dr. Laura during long drive thru line, who says "between now and dead is this how you want to live your life?...We're all unbelievably stressed right now.")
- 4:35 – 6:35 Rest/nap, meditation, dinner, check internet (none), call Atlantic Broadband (again...LOL...the more they try to fix the connection the worse it gets).
- 6:30 – 10:00 Clean dishes, answer email, check internet connection (none), review AIJ, STOPP-Y reports for upcoming meetings, respond to phone calls, draft something for service report, clear off desk
- 10:00 – 12:00 Clean and disinfect apt, shower, foot care, good night!

Review of the Day – I stayed busy throughout the day, and still felt the pressure of having too much to do. I was checking the internet too frequently and was frustrated in not having access. I got better throughout the day as I repeated the mantra accept everything and control nothing. I cannot control the internet service interruptions, so have to control myself. It was HOT HOT HOT...too hot for me to go outside and so I did not get enough exercise today. TODAY, I mostly passed my tests, though definitely NOT with honors.

Day 2 – September 3rd

I slept late. I did not track hourly but felt it was getting easier to "accept everything and control nothing." My test was the internet issues I've been having. I have given up trying to call or "control" my situation...accepted that some things just cannot get done right now. I started the day off with the murli, voice exercises, stretching..ran around trying to get documents notarized and in Fedex. Out in the heat, I became tired, and did little that evening.

Day 3 - September 4th – Collier County respite. By this time, I had given up entirely on every getting the internet again, stopped even carrying my phone, and decided I needed a break from Miami-Dade County. Off I go to Collier County, where it is pin drop quiet, beautiful open spaces where I am, and comfortable surroundings and a pool to exercise in...which I haven't been able to do for 6 months. Aaaaah...my great fortune and privilege to do this while others have grim situations to deal with.

Week 26, beginning September 6th, 2020: *Taking a Break; Catching Up!*

Sept 6-10, Collier County @ Katherine McDougall's house.

Aaah.... a chance to get away! How lucky and privileged I am. Good company, but not too much. Best things were the ability to get to the beach twice and float in the Gulf of Mexico and to enjoy the home's pool and jacuzzi! Realized how "small" my world has become and how "tightly" I have been holding my muscles. Walking on tile all the time, staying indoors, not feeling the 'expansiveness' of being outside has taken a toll on my body and my mind. Stretching, Feldenkrais, and being outside has been a great gift to me...and one that not many folks these days can enjoy.

Week 27, beginning September 13th, 2020: *"Only the Essential Things (which are a full time job now)!"*

Sept 14th AIJ succession meeting – long way to go to get Cheryl to the point of retirement

Sept 15th **Begin Impact Study**

Sept 16th PT appointment (recommended I do Tai Chi for balance), Flu Shot, and Culture Shock premiere of "Take Back Time"

Sept 17th Drive-thru Covid and antibody testing (both negative)

Sept 18th Afternoon pool session at AD Barnes

Sept. 18th RGB LEAVES!! And the world changes again...

Sept 19th "The Promise of Peace" – Third Sunday BK Meditation for World Peace

Definitely a back-to work week for me. Many appointments, Zoom calls, and projects ahead. Made it a point to get in touch with UD9. Everyone doing ok, but some just barely. Tough times everywhere. Election countdown brings more hateful words and Bots and Trolls. We Americans are such easy prey...are we too trusting? Too careless? Too lazy?

The Arts are essential to my well-being these days. An exquisite panel of arts leaders supporting a group of young, diverse "courageous creatives". These young students (who never met one another) collaborated virtually on a "triptych" film totaling 8:46 min (George Floyd's dying/death") [entitled "Take Back Time"](#). It looks at the Past, Present Future and they summed it up beautifully:

**"The past is not far behind me,
But we are present, and
We will liberate the future"**

Poetry, music, lyrics, film all came together in a crystal of many facets and hues. With \$, guidance, and support from arts leaders in the community, these young adults shared what they learned. I was struck how often they talked about "Safe Spaces" where they could express

themselves, be truly heard, and could learn and grow, and act on their ideas. One of the students said “Being present means holding space for yourself.”

The group has created a “freedom” document that lists dozens of ways ideas can move into action. It answers the question “What does change look like.” Interacting with a panel of arts leaders, some poignant ideas were shared:

- “We have images of a better place” (in their minds, and they want to get there).
- Having a “childlike imagination” is a virtual way of getting there. Imagine the “Republic of Imagination” where there are no citizens, no borders, no walls, no passports...”. Check out the book [Black Imagination](#)
- “Use your intuition to keep you safe when you enter spaces that are not safe for you.
- “It’s exhausting and lonely doing this work” (as a marginalized person).
- “What I learned: that I have a voice, that I am not small, even though I’m only 5’3”, that I’m a multitude of Ancestors with a million faces.”
- “Once we can create safe spaces for kids, only then can we address the problems of the world.”
- “I didn’t think I had the power to change the world, but now I do.”
- “Calling In” people vs “Calling Out” people.
- You are in charge of your own transformation.

A man from the Arsht (Johan?) said “Young artists have something to say about this moment. Young people are experts at limitless imagination. They ‘own the future’. “Just because I’m older and white, doesn’t mean I know all the answers. You have given me something I haven’t had for awhile...HOPE.”

My Take-away: We adults need to create “safe spaces”... We need to listen without judgment, wait without expecting anything. Create groups where youth have like minded peers (aka...Friends). (I’m reminded that the thing kids miss most about school is their friends). Support them with mentors, and give them leadership opportunities with guidance to assist them. SAFE SPACES, FRIENDS, MENTORS, OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORT.

Sept 18th – We are now “Ruth-less”. She tried to hold on and notably was looking forward to this “weird time” coming to an end. The cause of equality has lost another great champion. Many people are surprisingly unaware of her history, her fierce determination, her intellect, and her contributions to society. Society will suffer a setback without her on the Court.

Sept. 19th - In honor of the UN International Day of Peace, (45?) souls joined us for [“The Promise of Peace”](#) held in conjunction with Third Sunday Meditation for World Peace. Sr. Gayatri was our featured guest and was interviewed by BK Kathy. She shared beautiful memories of the beginning of BK involvement at the UN, thoughts about Peace and the

“spiritual trajectory” and her vision for the future. Sr. Gayatri also shared the Economic, Social and Planet (aka environmental) “landscapes” we see daily. She invited us to “let gratitude swell” in ourselves by looking at each landscape through lenses of Peace and Partnership. In that awareness, we can check ourselves: are we taking positive actions in a way that brings “dignity and worth” to all people, fosters a “greater sense of community”, and creates an “eco-friendly awareness” toward nature? Sr. Gayatri also led us in a special meditation entitled the [“Symphony of Peace”](#) and invited everyone to join in “Breathe Peace” in NY on October 2nd.

Week 28 beginning September 20th: *New Normal?*

Sept 22nd: Fairchild Walk with Ailyn
Sept:23: GPO call “I won’t go down without a massive fight”
Sept 24th: PT appointment with Cynthia
Sept 25th: Eye appointment with Dr. Taher
Sept 26th: “Caravan – Drivin’ with Debbie”
Sept 27th: Poisoned by the environment

The world continues to lurch in every direction. I have lost faith in the reported Covid numbers for Miami-Dade County and FL in general. As of 9/27/20 FL reported 1882 new cases, down from the high of more than 10K in July (8 weeks ago). The fine print discloses that deaths are not counted if the patient had been admitted for something else and upon testing was Covid+. Death would be attributed to the other admitting condition. Testing has slowed, although I am pleased that testing is available, convenient if you have a car, and free. I personally have decided to get myself tested every three months. The drive-through testing at Tropical park is convenient and well organized. The appointment website works well, the logistics are well deployed, the staff are pleasant and competent, and results are quick. Antibody results from the blood draw are delivered before one leaves the site. Covid results delivered in <48 hours.

Political leaders are pushing everything in order to please Trump and gain some political favor. Bars and strip clubs are opening...schools? Well, not so much. Legal wrangling, small businesses closing, and the outlook for community spread of the virus paints a rather grim picture. Even the prospect of having a new President doesn’t change the impending situations that will be ahead. What to do?

September 27th air quality was >150 while Miami was <30. Concerned that B and G are being poisoned out there.

Week 29 beginning Sept. 27th: *POTUS, SCOTUS, and COVID*

Sept 27th – 6 months since Dadi Janki left her body
Sept 26th – Rose Garden Ceremony for SCOTUS nominee Amy Comey Barrett
Sept 27th – The Trump Fall has begun; karma's a bitch!
Sept 29th – Presidential Debate #1
Oct 1st – Trump Dx with Covid-19
Oct 2nd – Trump helicoptered to Walter Reed Hospital
Oct 3rd – Trump takes joyride around hospital to see his supporters and exposing his aides

As I write this on September 28th, it is reported that FL has the lowest Covid positives since June (728). A ray of hope? Or lagging numbers? Or less testing? No faith in this at all. We lurch from Headline to Headline: ["Florida confirms 738 new COVID-19 cases, lowest single-day count since early June" \(Miami Herald\)](#). The fine print shows that FL is following the path of reducing positivity by testing less: *Monday's single day count of newly confirmed cases is the lowest reported since June 2 with 617 cases. On Monday, Florida's Department of Health also reported the results of 20,991 people on Sunday, less than half of what was counted the previous day. While fewer tests are usually processed during the weekend and sometimes also causes Monday to see a smaller case count, Florida hasn't reported tests in the 20,000-range since early to mid-June. Even then, tests in the 20,000s and less were more common in May, when single-day case counts were typically less than 1,000.... The county now has 169,466 confirmed cases and 3,228 deaths. Percent positivity for new cases: 2.70%. The 14-day positivity average is 4.30%, according to Miami-Dade County's "New Normal" Dashboard (Miami Herald)*

September 29th Presidential Debate was anything but "presidential". A post-debate word cloud would include "Disgraceful, Insulting, Inane, Scarey, Rude, Screaming, Disdainful, Empty, Embarrassing, Awful, and more. It was the political version of a "WWE smackdown". The biggest loser was the American democracy. Post-debate analyses revealed that Trump DID prepare to unleash a bully-ish attack on Biden, offering literally NOTHING of a his vision or plans for the future. He appeals to an increasingly small percentage of his Republican base...the extreme right/white/supremacist gun-totin' males.

September 30th marks the end of the federal fiscal year. Most are unaware that the Congress passed a continuing resolutions to keep the govt. running.

October 1st – only 4 days left to register to Vote!

I want to address those who haven't voted recently or who don't want to vote because a) one vote won't matter, b) politics is too corrupt, c) I don't know who to vote for, e) it's too hard and troublesome to research the candidates' and parties' platforms and positions, f) I don't want to put my health at risk by going to the polls, g) I don't understand all the amendments and ballot questions, and/or h) I just don't care (apathetic) and many more reasons. We can all come up with justifications for NOT doing something, so let me offer just THREE REASONS to Vote during this Election Season.

1. If you are eligible, it is your RIGHT to vote. It is also a DUTY. We in the USA proudly proclaim we are democracy, meaning that the “people” select representatives to govern in the best interests of all. Without an engaged electorate, democracy erodes. The “right to vote” was not an automatic thing. It was hard won by abolitionists, suffragists, civil rights activists and everyday people who cared enough to enact voting rights laws. Those laws are fragile unless everyone exercises their right. Today, voter suppression is a concern as is voter apathy; both of which grind down democracy to the point where voter turnout in the presidential election of 2016 was less than in 1828 (55.5% vs 57.6%). Please Vote Because You CAN!
2. If you receive or have ever received Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, SSI, disability benefits, veterans benefits, unemployment compensation, food stamps, healthcare at a public hospital or health center, dialysis free of charge, federally guaranteed student loans, federal student financial aid, survivors or dependents educational benefits, military spouse/family educational assistance, Section 8 housing voucher or rental assistance from HUD, disaster loans, small business loans, veterans preference in federal hiring, non-cash benefits such as subsidized child-care or employment training, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), children’s health insurance (CHIP), federally-supported alcohol/drug treatment and recovery programs, Head Start, or any other of the many state and local programs that are funded through federal block grants. These programs do not just “happen”. They are the result of the work done by our elected representatives to make life better for everyone. A democracy works best when there is a flourishing “middle class” that is healthy, employed, educated and trained, with stable housing in safe communities with a clean environment, and who contribute in significant ways to the overall wellbeing of their families, communities, country, and the world. Please Vote Because you CARE.
3. Please understand that the things we take for granted: our democracy, the right to vote, and the supportive programs we have come to expect do not “just happen”. For example, it was under Democratic President Franklin Roosevelt that the Social Security Act was passed in 1934. Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower understood the need for an Interstate Highway System and signed legislation in 1944, giving a boost to the economy and jobs for returning veterans after World War II. Unfortunately, many communities of color were bulldozed to create space for highways and we live with the social consequences of that policy to this day. Under Democratic President Lyndon Baines Johnson’s “Great Society”, the federal government implemented Medicare, Medicaid, the Older Americans Act, and numerous health and educational programs.

Intended to reduce poverty and level the playing field for all Americans during a time of civil unrest and growing involvement in the conflicts leading to the Vietnam War, Americans have come to rely upon these programs for more than 50 years.

Each political party has its AGENDA and PLATFORM. Leaders in both parties have had notable accomplishments over the years. Under Republican leadership, the USA established relations with China (Nixon), ended the Vietnam War (Nixon); established Special Education (Ford), pursuing détente with Russia (Reagan), helped reunify Germany (Bush Sr.), Created Medicare Part D (Bush Jr). Democratic accomplishments include creating the Minimum Wage Act (Roosevelt), entering the US into the UN and NATO (Truman), Creating the Peace Corps and entering the “space race” (Kennedy), Creating Medicare and Medicaid (Johnson), signing the Camp David Accords (Carter), negotiating the Good Friday Peace Accords and creating a budget surplus (Clinton), passing the Affordable Care Act and responding to the recession of 2008 with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Obama). Please Vote Because You Have CONFIDENCE in the party and its leaders.

Trump’s Covid diagnosis and behavior is nothing short of him being a public health menace. No one wishes him to be ill, but honestly I am neither surprised nor sympathetic. My sympathy lies with all those he has infected and all the families who have suffered from his total ineptness. Not without responsibility are all those who have enabled him for their own purposes. At this point I cannot imagine that anyone in his/her right mind thinks Trump is good for this country. I challenge those who think he’s a “good businessman”, I find narrow-minded those who think the economy = the stock market, I rebel against those who think it’s OK to keep people like “Cory Booker” out of their neighborhoods (Cory Booker, are they kidding?), and I am horrified by those who have a “don’t care” attitude towards anyone other than “their own kind”. Trump has engineered a leveraged buy out of this country, enriching himself using OPM...other people’s money...in this case the hard earned dollars of the American people.

Week 30 beginning October 4th: *Health, Healthcare, and Service*

Oct 5th – Pulmonologist / Dr. Palmero telehealth visit

Oct 6th – PT visit; Trump released from Walter Reed Hospital; displays drug-induced hypomania on White House balcony; Oct 6th – Pool Opened at VKC ☺

Oct 6th – Local Emergency Order expired/ Miami-Dade Mayor relaxes mask requirement

Oct 7th – Vice Presidential Debate, Kamala Harris /Mike Pence:

Oct 8th: - GPO call with Ed Craft

Oct. 9th – Talk for Inner Space, Covent Garden (UK)

I was very happy to begin the week with my pulmonologist via telehealth. Took my own vitals and was prepared for my follow up appointment. I am doing well, nothing she is “following”; doesn’t want to expose me to the hospital for a complete pulmonary function test given that the results would likely not change the treatment regimen. Advised a spirometer to get a baseline while I am well and so I can notice and report any changes. Keep on doing what I am doing: stay healthy, keep exercising, take the meds, take my vitamins, see her in 6 months! I was elated that after 18 months, I think my asthma is mostly under control. I had a feeling of pride that my hard work is yielding results. I have been a good patient and am grateful for her guidance and supportive care. She set the wheels in motion for me to see an ENT/Dr. Corinna Levine at UM, who referred me to Otolaryngologist Dr Rossow, who referred me to Jenny Lee Diaz /Speech Pathologist for 6 mos of voice therapy. Adding PT to the mix has really worked wonders. The rest is up to me: more immune boosting foods, cut down sugar, take more Vit D to get my level to 40+, do vocal and breathing exercises, be sure to get enough sleep, and regular exercise (pool, ballet, Feldenkreis and PT recommended adding Tai Chi). Of course having the regular practice of spiritual study and meditation is the foundation for everything else I am doing.



Oct 9th: Notes from my talk for Inner Space/Covent Garden: *The Courage to Be Disliked*

Chit chat – get to know the speaker.

What I’ve taken up that I didn’t do before. BALLET!

I realized very early in this pandemic that I had to take extra care of my body, mind, and spirit during these days. I began to self-quarantine in March because of my age and medical conditions. I later learned that I had been exposed Covid so it was fortunate that I began my own lockdown early.

I have been working at home for some time, so that was nothing new. But honestly, I felt “cooped up” without being able to come and go as I pleased, much less travel. Under normal circumstances, next week I would have been in Puerto Rico for the US Conference on HIV/AIDs, but instead I’ll be joining about 5000 people on Zoom for a virtual conference. And yes, I also suffer from “Zoom fatigue” these days!

I wanted to use this time in lockdown to learn something new or do something different that I never would have imagined doing. As luck would have it, I saw a notice on Facebook that the Miami City Ballet started offering a “Ballet Basics” class on Instagram each Saturday morning. I was hooked after the first class. Of course my plies and releve’s are ridiculous, but ballet is so uplifting in many ways. It not only gave me the opportunity to exercise some muscles I hadn’t

used in years, but also to connect to my body in a way that helped ground me, helped my posture, my breathing, reduced my stress and made me smile.

Lately, I've taken some classes with the Royal Academy of Dance - RAD - (with almost 20K subscribers), where I learned how to do those "swan arms" you see in the Swan Lake ballet. I've become a real ballet enthusiast and I watch all the performances that are online from the Royal Ballet, and I'm a big fan of the Miami City Ballet.

The Royal Academy of Dance created the "moving summer" program and now it's Black History Month and like other "courageous creatives" (a term coined by a special project in miami for young creative artists), the arts are celebrating and standing with those who speak out against racism and social injustice. I've found that artists are some of the kindest, most gentle and caring people. I remember the other time I took up something different...it was a watercolor class that I took after I finished my Master's degree. I cannot draw, and we were out in a forest painting covered bridges over the river. When we had our final critique, there were so many wonderful paintings...and then there was mine. My classmates were so kind and generous with their comments despite the fact that my painting was barely recognizable. 😊

Overall, I think the arts have a real role to play during these times. The Miami City Ballet for example, said "you've been here for us over the years, and now we're here for you" - by doing free classes and performances on-line. That line hit me hard and brought tears to my eyes, because right now so many of us feel alone and that there is "no one here for me" ... That sense of loneliness and isolation these days is palpable. I work in behavioral health and I hear these kinds of stories every day.

Ballet brings beauty, creativity, movement, and a real soul-filling experience. And by the way, many artists, performers, musicians, are unemployed these days. And I can't imagine when a full orchestra might be able to play again, or when anyone would want to sit in a crowded theatre for a movie or live performance? So this is also my plea for all of us who are still employed or have meaningful work to do, to remember those who might be struggling in so many ways.

Arti – "Over to You...."

Thank you Arti, for the honor of joining you all this evening. Welcome to Miami everyone! It's been a few years since I've been in London but Covent Garden is a favorite spot of mine. I've always loved Friday evenings...usually the end of the work week, and happy to prepare for an enjoyable weekend ahead.

Tonight's Topic: The Courage to Be Disliked: Succeeding as you are

Before he was a President (while he was a US Senator) President John F. Kennedy wrote a book "Profiles in Courage" while he was recovering from back surgery...it won a Pulitzer prize in 1957. The book was about political courage but it has relevance for this talk. Kennedy talked about courage in the face of 3 types of pressure the first pressure was the pressure to be liked. (the other 2 were the pressure to be re-elected and the pressure of constituents and interest groups)

The US political leaders included in his book earned their place by have the courage to be disliked.

When we think about some great leaders, courageous leaders like Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Ghandi, Susan B. Anthony in the US she led the charge to provide women the right to vote, there's always an element of being disliked...yet they persist and bring about great societal changes.

Who doesn't want to be liked? When I first thought about this topic, I thought well I've never been disliked (that I know of), but on further reflection, I realized that it wasn't that OTHERS disliked me, but that I was trying very hard to be LIKEABLE. When ***We try to be likeable, we can end up becoming someone we aren't, trying to live up to others' expectations, wanting to please others and seek approval.*** We end up DISLIKING OURSELVES.

That was my story.

So, with your permission, I'd like to take up three aspects of this topic:

- 1) When we tried hard to be likeable, we lose ourselves. So, How do we come to dislike ourselves... I remember saying I've forgotten who I am. Feelings of dislike for what I'd become.
- 2) What if I stopped trying to be liked or meet everyone's expectations or please my boss or my spouse or my family?
- 3) What are some methods for freeing myself to succeed as I am (to be happier with myself, more authentic, and have meaningful relationships and connections with everyone)

1. How do we come to dislike ourselves?

- a. **Labeling** We can begin do dislike ourselves early in life. For many years I was a volunteer with the Living Values Education Program, a global character education initiative started in the 1990s by the Brahma Kumaris and has now spun off into its own international organization. One of the workshops I often did for parents and teachers was on labeling –

Have you ever heard a parent say about their children..."he's the athletic one," "she's the smart one", "He's lazy", "She's a rebellious one" or other characterizations? Children can learn very early to live into those labels...especially if the label is reinforced. Teachers can do this too. I can recall many instances where teachers would warn other teachers about a student who was going from say – 3rd grade – to 4th grade for example. "Watch out for him, he's a troublemaker"

Maybe some of you were labeled that way...EVEN UNCONSCIOUSLY. Over time, we begin to assume the label, and what's worse WE THINK THAT'S WHO WE ARE.

- A child who is labeled a "nerd" may avoid trying new, supposedly "non-nerdy" things because they're confined to the idea that that's who they are
- Children who labeled "artistic" may feel bad when they lose interest in the arts, feeling like they are failing their purpose
- It can be a self-fulfilling prophecy – labeling a child "gifted" or conversely a "slow learner". Of course there are actual diagnoses, but I'm talking about impressions or characterizations that we just do naturally to help us describe someone.

I would urge you instead of labeling, to be specific with children and each other. I really liked the way you thought that problem through (instead of nerdy)...or that's a beautiful picture you painted, tell me more about it) and so forth. Be specific in your comments...

2. The second way we may come to dislike ourselves is because of something about us that is different or that I dislike...my appearance, a disability, some guilt or shame, or my behavior (something I've done that was wrong or unkind). These beliefs are reinforced: "I'll never get a date," "I'll never amount to anything", "I can never forgive or be forgiven" ... these are serious thoughts and can lead to mental health disorders. As I reinforce these beliefs about myself, they harden and the consequence is I close my heart and often I begin to distance myself from people so that I don't get hurt. At some level, dislike tells me I am unworthy.

I want to say another very important thing about this – especially during these times of realizing how difficult it has been for some members of society to fully participate because of some characteristic or difference such as race. When these differences give rise to racial, ethnic, gender stereotypes AND the myths around those constructs are enacted into LAW, that becomes discrimination. Let me give you an example from my own work in educational equity in the USA>

Example of girls not able to do math

Blacks not able to read/write – too dumb

PAUSE TO TAKE A MOMENT OF REFLECTION TO THINK ABOUT OUR OWN LIVES AND THE WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY LABELS GIVEN EARLY BY PARENTS OR TEACHERS , OR BY THOUGHTS OF OUR OWN APPEARANCE, ABILITIES, OR THINGS I'VE DONE OR FAILED TO DO IN LIFE.

CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY OF WHAT IT MIGHT BE LIKE TO LET ALL OF THOSE BURDENS GO...

TO BE FREE OF THE EXPECTATION OF OTHERS, TO FEEL GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION FOR MY OWN PHYSICAL BODY, TO REMOVE ANY LABELS OR STEREOTYPES THAT ARE "STUCK ON YOU" LIKE A PLASTIC NAMETAG...AND TO JUST BE FREE, BE LIGHT, BE OPEN AND BE PRESENT. IN THE SPIRIT OF "OM SHANTI"

Pause

These things we have carried around are heavy burdens...and we have been carrying them for so long. One person actually described it to me as carrying a sack of concrete around on my back.

Let's create a new PROFILE IN COURAGE...for myself.

Here are THREE SUGGESTIONS/METHODS FOR FINDING THE COURAGE TO FIND YOURSELF AND BE YOURSELF. The goal is to break the ties that bind us – to liberate myself from the story I tell myself /about myself. With practice, we can release the joy and openness of our true nature.

#1 – RECOGNIZE and RELEASE THE INNER STRUGGLE. Use the feelings of dislike as a tool for showing me the way back to myself. Martin Luther King for example, followed Gandhi's nonviolent approach and he was disliked for advocating a nonviolent approach to discrimination against Black people. Many in the movement felt that there should be an eye for an eye approach. Yet he persisted and the very thing he was criticized for became the hallmark for progress.

#2: USE THE SITUATION OR THE DISLIKE YOU HAVE FOR THE SITUATION/PERSON like a homeopathic medicine... homeopathic medicines use tiny amounts of different substances to stimulate our immune system. Homeopathy is based on the notion that the body can – and always wants to – heal itself.

The Buddhist practice of Tonglen is like this...literally it's "sending and receiving" – using the breath, awareness of the suffering and fear of myself and others, and changing my attitude from dislike to compassion. We breathe in with awareness and we breathe out with relaxation and spaciousness.

#3 INTERRUPT HABITUAL PATTERNS

We have HABITUAL PATTERNS: some try to smooth things over, others prefer to avoid or even start some conflict, some react and fight back.

We want to make ourselves better...we are convinced that if we did the "right" things everything would be OK.

Have the attitude that

- Whatever arises is OK
- Take a breath back into awareness of yourself...open, spacious, free from thoughts about myself...I am OK for feeling however I am feeling. I can relax
- Meditation is a great tool to help us stop fighting (with ourselves) and break the patterns of reacting. We can stop struggling with whatever the situations or feelings are. We can stop struggling with what is w/o making it our enemy.

REFLECTION:

I take a few breaths to relax myself.

It's the beginning of a new weekend when I can rest and renew myself. Whatever has been troubling me in my life, whatever doubts or worries or fears I might have...

....whatever regrets about the past or hopes for the future I may have are like clouds passing by

....I see them, I acknowledge themI let them pass

...I see these things occupying space in my mind and my spirit....and I let them float away as I exhale...

...I take another breath in and feel the spaciousness in myself...I am open, free of thoughts or judgments about myself or others

...I have an attitude of gratitude for my life...all the gifts I have been given...for the blessing of each new day...

...Whatever the reasons for the things that trouble me, let those be the seeds of a solution...

....in silence I can feel courage welling up in me, I know myself as I truly am... peaceful, loving, compassionate, kind....

....Rest for a moment in that awareness that I have that natural courage, that I can keep my mind and heart open even as I help to dissolve the pain that others may be feeling.

>>>>I use this time to write my own "Profile in Courage"

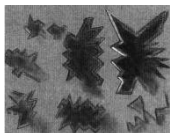
Close with this JFK/Profiles in Courage quote:

“In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience – the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow men – each man must decide for himself the course he will follow. The stories of past courage can define that ingredient – they can teach, they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this each man must look into his own soul.”

Week 31 beginning October 11th: *Huddles, Hustles*

Monday, Oct 12th Columbus Day, B-Care Huddle, BG Hustle
Tuesday, Oct 13th PT
Wednesday, Oct 14th AIJ Strategic Planning meeting
Thursday, Oct 15th USCHA pre-conference
Friday, Oct 16th Danny and James, UM Med 2nd year med students interview
Saturday, Oct 17th Madhubhan double foreigners program

Filled the week with work-related things; B-Care Huddles, Hustles with BG to work on reports, and kick off of AIJ strategic planning meetings and succession planning. Too much to record all the detail. Meanwhile, election insanity is in crescendo and the virus too. Beautiful video tour of Madhuban as this is the season when double foreigners would usually be travelling to India. Felt like I was watching the BK version of Sr. Wendy touring the Louvre! Beautiful and inspiring.



Week 32 beginning October 18th: “*I VOTED*”, *Great Speeches & Ouch!*

Sunday, Oct 18th Sr. Jenna “The Power of the Pause: release into Peace”
Monday, Oct 19th I VOTED, Huddle, Hustle and USCHA virtual conference! (I was supposed to be in Puerto Rico today)
Tuesday, October 20th: AIJ succession committee, Cynthia PT, USCHA
Wednesday, Oct 21: GPO call with Kimberly Konkel
Friday, Oct 23: 4-hand MFR/PT/Energy work and then Tanya Rich movement/breathing/alignment class from

The BK Third Sunday program with Sr. Jenna was spectacular! Aimed as a ‘pre-election’ or “meditate the vote” program along with world peace meditation, Sr. Jenna gave a magnificent talk, answered questions, and shared a guided commentary she was among the best we’ve ever had. Her authenticity, her ‘realness’ and obvious honesty shone through. I took her point that it’s discipline along with our ‘detached and loving’ approach that keeps her able to be both

engaged and contemplative. This is also my goal. To take my energy and sustenance from the ONE, and to be able to share that widely.

Special 4-hand treatment with Cynthia and her intern Noah. Shoulder/rotator cuff tweak...full on total body treatment which unleashed amazing amounts of energy and movement. I added the special movement/breathing/alignment class with Tanya Rich from Covent Garden BKs. Such amazing body work all day! I felt like I had been to the spa in Ojai California and paid a fortune! But I was exhausted dafter all of that.

Weekend visit to Neo, work w/ PC on Impact Study, and cleaned.

2 scintillating scotomas this week – stress, food, too much screen time

Sr. Mohini – “Use the intellect to understand shrimat [God’s directions] and make every action elevated.”

Awakening the Power of the Intellect

1. The “divine intellect” thought of as the ‘third eye’
2. First thing we know is what is “right” and what is “wrong”
3. Then we know what is “positive” and what is “negative” (good, bad)
4. Then we understand “pure” and “impure”
5. Then “divine” and “devilish”
6. Then “benevolent” vs “harmful”

A good intellect is concentrated and studies well

Have a “Swan” intellect – can distinguish pearls from stone. Goddesses are often seen riding swans. It is a holy bird. The Holy Intellect is Pure. It has the power to discern. It is connected to God. The Divine Intellect is higher than the Holy Intellect. We are God’s creation and have to share his blessings. Swan Intellect, Holy Intellect, Divine Intellect. (Divine Goddesses)

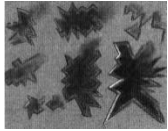
Wisdom is blissful, it goes beyond pleasant and unpleasant. Wisdom is not just knowledge. It is knowledge of the Past, Present, Future. It is farsighted (Vivek?); it is Insights & teachings.

Swan Intellect = pearls only

Holy Intellect – no attachments/feelings. Not holding anything. There is some settling, some growing.

Practical: If I am not using mercy w/ shrimat – it could be a trap. Follow shrimat when you use a quality with others (like compassion). Whatever you give should not increase your attachment. (I have fallen into this trap...giving until I can’t stop giving and building attachment along the way...to make someone dependent, to always be right, to “my way”, to convince myself that I am ‘good’.)

There is Love of the Heart, Love of the Mind, Love of the Intellect (eg love of the Teacher). These are different from “feelings” and makes us worthy. DISCERN, DISCRIMINATE, DECIDE



Week 33 beginning October 25th : *Dushara, More Speeches and more Ouch!*

Sunday, October 25th Dushara puja (virtual) with Sr. Mohini and PV

Monday, Oct 26 Huddle, Hustle, AIJ meeting

Tuesday, Oct 27th PT / USCHA/Drop off docs to Ms. Ailyn

I loved the virtual Dushara celebration with Sr. Mohini and the big bonfire at Peace Village. After 9 days of learning about the Powers through the goddesses, we wrote whatever we wanted to burn (weaknesses, vices, etc)...I burned Anger, Lust, Dislike, Criticism, Feelings of Unworthiness, Jealousy, Feelings of Doubt, Lack of Confidence in Myself. DONE!

Sr. Mohini – “Times have changed, so the speed of effort has to change.” What are the right actions, words, attitudes, that keep me growing and help others grow? Is frustration and anger driving me? Pleasure or productivity?

Week filled with Huddles, Hustles, Zoom meetings, PT, Report Writing, but not enough down time and reflection.

I believe I am on the right path to becoming more disciplined about my practices while still working and socially engaged. This is where I am – where I’m supposed to be – although I interest myself in imagining if I lived back in Evanston. Clearly that town has a rhythm closer to my own. Watching [Gabrielle Roth 5 Rhythms](#)...each place, each person has a rhythm. Will experiment with dancing to the Latin Beat, the rhythm of South FL.

Dreamed of riding a brown horse. Supposedly a powerful/energy-filled dream. Getting ready for what is ahead with strength and passion! More PT/MFR/Energy work – exquisite pain in shoulder/neck/rhomboids, blocked energy in 3rd chakra (“there is no good or bad energy...it’s all just energy”). Felt the blocked energy and fear to release it...as if I would explode wildly.

Week 35 beginning November 1, 2020: ELECTION DAY: *Election week...Election Season...*

Made [“Election Cake”](#) on Monday night!

Election Day Cake is actually a classic English fruitcake or plum cake. The original Election Day Cake included molasses, spice, raisins, and currants were used in this cake.



Later brandy was added. Election Day was considered an important holiday in early New England. In importance, it ranked second only to Thanksgiving. As our Puritan ancestors were denied the joys of Christmas and Easter, Election Day with its festivities of parades, religious ceremonies, balls, and fine foods helped compensate for the loss. Because of this, they made Election Day into a holiday in which everything broke loose, people gathered in town and visited each other's houses. (Wikipedia)

I woke on election day with "A song in my heart" (Jane Froman) and [Etta James "At Last"](#). Went to PT and brought cake. Cynthia remarked "I hoped you used a different recipe this time." LOL - Had 4-hand MFR/PT and energy work treatment for my rotator cuff problem; signs of impingement and adhesion of the muscles around the shoulder. It is painful – both by itself and with the treatment. Have been living with this for about 3-4 weeks now. Mentioned the song "At Last" to Cynthia...she immediately popped out a pic of her daughter who just had those words tattooed on her rib (where her dad would never see it). Heard the story of how they would hold her and dance with her to that song when she was an infant; it quieted / comforted her.

It's been a roller coaster week, month, year, 4 years. I love politics, the speeches, the campaigns, and the strategies for winning. But this has been the most vitriolic and hateful campaign I've ever seen. No trace of decency by most candidates and their workers. Spanish language print, digital, and broadcast media have been filled with lies, labels, and libel. Hateful language in both English and Spanish. I wish that English language speakers would listen to the ads (and have someone translate for them) and know what's being said. As I sit here on Nov 5th...votes still being counted...I feel that ads painting every Democratic candidate as "Socialist" "Communist" "Enemy" should have been responded to, not with anger but with TRUTH. Some candidates did respond, but only in the final days...these labels have been attached to Dems for years! I have drawn 2 conclusions thus far about the campaigns in South FL:

1. The Cuban Republican "machine" made a clean sweep of local campaigns. They have been cultivating the fears of Cubans, and now Venezuelans, with propaganda for years as well as doing old-style giveaways. Getting a box of cheese goes a long way. Sadly they unseated two DEM US Reps: Donna Shalala (my rep) and Debbie Mucasel-Powell (of Ecuadorean descent, which doesn't "count" as the right kind of Hispanic in Miami)...replacing them with a Trump sycophant / recent Mayor of Miami-Dade County and a Cuban incendiary radio talk show host. Those Cuban loyalists will now play in a bigger pond than Miami Dade County – positioned to steer contracts and contacts to their friends and family and decry Castro and Maduro to provide sound bites to placate local, and hopefully give away some cheese to those who put them in office. I will stop my diatribe now and watch to see what they DELIVER to and for the people of their Miami-

Dade County districts. Just the thought of them in DC makes me nauseated. The know less “civics” than the average 5th grader.

2. I agree with Steve Schmidt, Republican strategist, that “America has a SOCIOLOGY PROBLEM”...which is that we have grown our own brand of extremists/home-grown terrorists. I believe that problem stems from the shrinking middle class in the USA as a chief contributor. I will explore this more via the wonderful data site launched by IBM and others to quell the lies and half-truths promulgated during the 2020 campaign, [USA FACTS](#).

3. On the bright side, our new County Mayor will be Daniella Levine-Cava. Our first woman mayor in the only major city founded by founded by a woman, Julia Tuttle. Julia was born on my birthday and I feel a kinship. Daniella will bring needed changes to county government. The main reason she beat the Cuban favorite is that she too has had a ‘ground game’ – i.e. a lifetime of service to this community and many many grassroots supporters. The labels didn’t stick too well to her AND she forcefully denounced them when they came after her. There was little not to like...one local digital media outlet [“Endorsed her for Everything” ...LOL](#)



November 6-8: Global Silence Retreat. I thought I needed this, but did not expect it to be so revealing...What was I thinking??? I made the decision to be present for this quiet time/retreat at the BK Retreat Center in Delhi, India (virtually of course)..and after a quiet early morning meditation in ORC and as we were getting into the reflective exercises, my phone started lighting up and pinging with texts: THE ELECTION HAD BEEN CALLED – BIDEN IS THE PRESIDENT ELECT!

November 7th – 11:30 AM....a rush of emotions and tears...OMG, it’s happened! What state put him over? I was filled with questions and set aside my silence of the mind to watch the results and the jubilation breaking out in cities all over the country. I was glued to the TV for awhile and committed to watching the Biden-Harris ticket address the nation on Saturday night. The speeches were great! My two takeaways: Harris: “There is Joy in Democracy” and Biden “If I

could sum up Democracy in one word it would be Possibility.” So this is what they have restored as hallmarks to our USA democracy: Joy and Possibility. Kamala has Joy in her...you can see it in her eyes, even with a mask. Biden has patience and persistence. Gayatri said his unique quality is ability to give Regard, reminding her of her own dad who was an elected official in Guyana. I have the very clear sense he is the absolutely right leader for this moment....almost without ego, and driven by love of family and urgings by his son. For all the evangelicals calling for a God-given leader, I believe that there is God’s grace in the election results. This is “The Drama” as we call it...and it is completely accurate.

From the Retreat: reflection points were so well integrated with the murli, bhog messages and Sr. Mohini’s classes. Focusing on the Inner Sanctuary...creating that within myself.

Reflection #1: Loving Form of the Karmateet Stage. What is MY relationship to the karmateet stage? What does it mean to me? How does it feel? Problems are a creation of my weaknesses. What does that mean to me now? What is my pure intention for the retreat? *These were too many questions for me to get my head around: just had the intention to be present and let’s see what happens.*

From the murli and my notes: Bodiless stage is connected to becoming karmateet. We are coming CLOSE to the big time of transformation.

So, what is the specialty of becoming karmateet? For as long as you still have that body and you are playing your part through your physical organs on this field of action, you cannot stop performing actions for even a second. Karmateet means to beyond the bondage of karma while performing actions. One is a bondage, and the other is a relationship. To enter a relationship of karma through the physical organs is a different matter from being tied in a bondage of karma. Karmic bondage makes you dependent on the limited fruit of karma. The word “dependent” proves that you are depending on someone”

Q: What helped me transform from ‘bondage’ to ‘relationship’ with karma? A: What helps me transform is getting some distance to gain perspective and quiet my emotions. There is good news to share: a new religion and heaven are being established right now. Sounds crazy, but that means that unity and harmony are going to be restored. I have to become and stay soul conscious: to make my vision and attitude pure. I am studying for the new world.

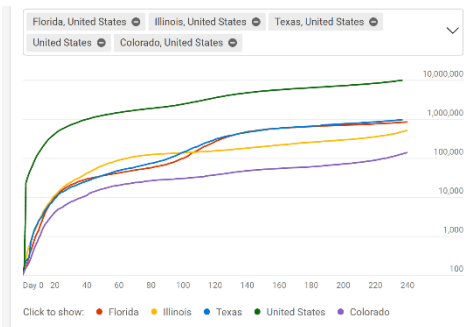
Sunday, November 8th: Perfect murli for today read by Gayatri...*The foundation for transformation and remembrance is God’s Love.* Are there seconds of experience when I am merged in God’s love? Sr. Mohini has suggested holding a quality for 10 min during meditation..to turn that quality into a Power. Can I do this? God’s love is the Foundation for transformation. Am I ready, do I have that capacity to hold God’s love? The thread of being “one” makes us move forward.

Week 36 beginning November 8, 2020: *Exhausted and Astonished*

I find myself exhausted and astonished by the feelings and words I've kept to myself over the past four years. We have been cautioned about not letting these things get into the soul, but nonetheless I must have invited or at least allowed them in. Biden kept his stage – peaceful and calm and positive – much better than I have kept mine. Trump's behavior and his words have so disgusted me...and yes, I know it's all in the drama and there's benefit in everything...but he and his sycophants have raped and pillaged this country. He nearly completed a hostile takeover of the USA. He eviscerated the government that was formed to make us a nation. He sold his own soul multiple times to the highest bidder and the soul of this country for self-aggrandizement and personal gain. He has demeaned the position of President and the USA's place in the world as a leader and valued partner. He made misogyny, hate, violence, and greed "normal" and even valued, particularly for men. Some kind of "toxic masculinity" and crazy brand of "machismo" was encouraged and promoted by this con man, a weak, fearful, sick, mentally ill human being who is nothing but a puppet and product of an equally sick and dysfunctional family and upbringing. Now hopefully Biden and Harris will restore the values of decency, civility, kindness, justice, equity, caring, compassion, trust. I was so repulsed because I believe deeply in justice and fairness and basic human dignity, and my values have been violated. I still do not understand how 70+MM people wanted to return Trump to office. I can only believe it's the hardening of the divisions we have now...fear of "losing" something...greed for more profits and lower taxes...dislike for the "other"NIMBY! Chris Wallace on Fox news gave the kindest analysis, noting that Trump's skill set was as a "Salesman"...shilling for his "brand"...making all kinds of claims about how great it will be, how it will be like nothing we've ever seen, etc. That was not the skill set needed to handle a pandemic. He applied what he knew how to do...paint a rosy - if false - picture, say it will go away, say they did more than anyone ever could, say that it was someone else's fault, tell people not to let it rule their lives, deny, decry, divide... It just didn't work.

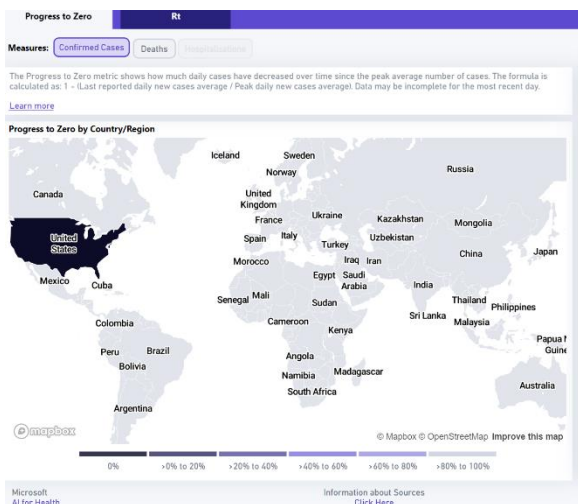
I am in a period of emotional detoxing...completely re-aligning my attitude and energy towards the "light". As we are in the season of Thanksgiving and Diwali, the harvest season of abundance and gratitude, I am taking a deliberate turn away from that pain of the past 4 years and looking higher and longer into the future. Even as I know that things are bad and will get worse, an age of harmony WILL emerge if I can stay peaceful.

Meanwhile, the COVID numbers are growing while we have been consumed by the election results.



This chart is a log chart. It shows the exponential growth of COVID in a few states and the USA. I would say that FL is in the 3rd surge of the 1st wave...We NEVER got a handle on the viral spread. Those who advocate for herd immunity just don't understand what they are saying, what they are asking for. FL reported (or under reported positivity rate) is well above the recommended 5%. Update: Today 11/17/20, WI has a positivity rate of

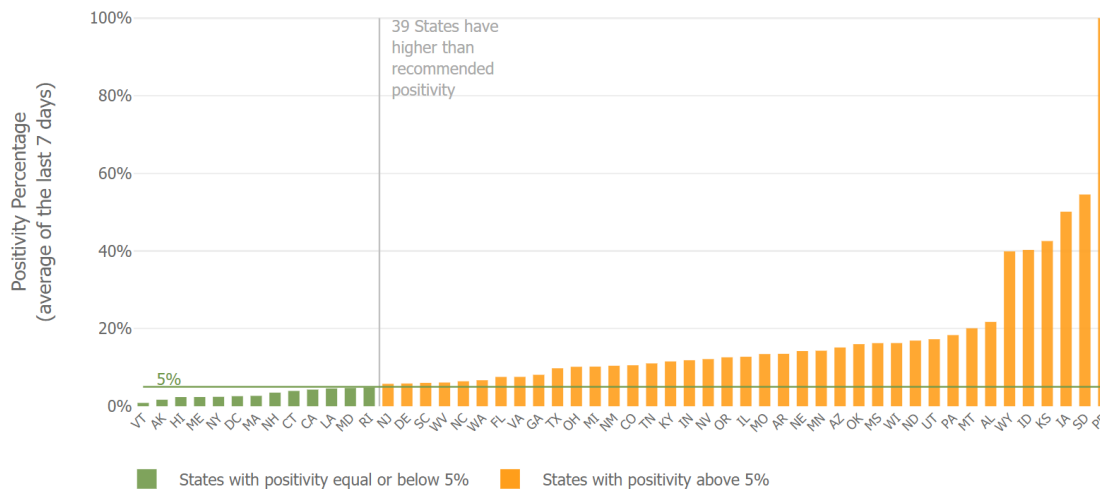
nearly 30%.



Here is another way to look at our – [Progress to 0](#) – which shows that the USA has made ZERO progress toward “crushing the virus” as Nancy Pelosi likes to say.

FL is doing better IF you count the # of new cases 11/11/2020 as being DOWN from our Peak High in July...5300/12000. Or about 57% down from our high...but nowhere near ZERO spread... Frankly, we are testing less and counting in different ways. This is another way in which the lack of leadership has led to inconsistencies in data collection and reporting.

The [CDC Approach #4](#) enables us to see the actual positivity rates by state as of 11/11/2020:



Friday the 13th of November finds the USA in dire straits...estimates suggest that we would double the number of COVID deaths in the next 3 months! Dr. Fauci is always ahead of the game. He predicted a very 'dark winter' months ago if we did nothing. Here we are on the cusp of that winter, and Dr. Fauci is talking Hope now..."just hang in there" the vaccine is coming soon. Meanwhile would someone please tell FL Gov DeSantis and Republican Senators Rubio and Scott that there is a pandemic going on? What their denial is doing is nothing short of criminal. Instead of rubbing Trump's ego (and god-knows what else), they might pay a bit more attention to what is happening right here! "C'mon down and enjoy that FL vacation...in the 'I don't give a damn about the pandemic State". Mother Nature is taking care of us now...rain, flood, storms, little sunshine, mosquitoes, humidity...returning this dear State to its original 'state' of wetlands, prairies, rivers of grass (AKA, The Everglades).

From today's BK morning class: *"Intellects have turned to stone."* That's for sure...I am conscious and aware of my own stone intellect in not recognizing and understanding the spiritual knowledge that has been made available to me. *"This is the time of settlement."* Stability is what's needed now, at this time. Don't get caught up with things – even with death. Understand that people, all people, are settling karmic accounts, whether our own or with others. Our attachment to things, people, even animals creates our sorrow.

Preparing for the BK UN conversation tomorrow on the “Torch of Tolerance” – using Tolerance in a transformative way. Not putting up with something or grinning and bearing it but using tolerance as a mirror, maybe a light, and certainly as a flame to help me transform old ways of thinking, doing, and being.

From TEACH TOLERANCE, a project to help teachers educate children and youth to become active participants in a diverse democracy.

In its Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, UNESCO offers a definition of tolerance that most closely matches our philosophical use of the word: *Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. Tolerance is harmony in difference.*

From My Intro to the program: “Nothing sets the context for this conversation than the words of Federico Mayor, the former Director General of UNESCO. He is a scientist by training (pharmacist) and during his time at UNESCO (1987-99), he was said to have given “new life” to UNESCO by putting the organization at the “service of Peace, Tolerance, Human Rights, and peaceful coexistence”. Today he is still focused on that mission through various initiatives. It was during his time at UNESCO that he met the Brahma Kumaris and in a real way, he is part of the reason we are here today.

The program was so uplifting. Gayatri believes success is measured now on the basis of how uplifted people feel at end of a program. I certainly did. Even though we ran over time, about 150 people stayed on Zoom, eager to hear more from Canon Lloyd Casson and Veronica from the BK Center. Lloyd has a most compassionate nature undoubtedly refined over many years. He takes it all in stride and you know in his being he has seen it all. He says Howard Thurman was his mentor, and he has deep African American spirituality. I noticed that Lloyd, Veronica, and musician Denzal Sinclair ALL commented on having a “vision” of a better world. Veronica always seems to see the highest in people. She credits her mother and of course Dadi Janki. Somehow it was in their DNA or cultivated over time, but I can see that the vision is essential to surviving these times of strife. I asked Gayatri which comes first, having the vision or an attitude? She says a pure intellect comes first...otherwise you cannot have the vision. Another vote for Purity!

Week 37 beginning November 15, 2020: *Diwali, the Festival of Light and Beach Erosion*

November 15th: Third Sunday and our special guest Sr. Gita from LA. Diwali was not on my radar as a holiday growing up, but now it has become one of the most celebrated holidays in the world. Sr. Gita has the most wonderful presence, a strong silent vibe coming from a beautiful countenance and penetrating eyes. Whether virtual or in her physical presence, she

draws us both higher and deeper. I have been captivated by the happiness of the occasion, the symbolism of cleaning up and cleaning out, and the celebratory nature of lights, food, and gift giving. What's not to like? In true Indian style, the festival lasts for many days.

But now, after a full weekend of BK programs, I am tired.

I recognize in full measure the toll on my body, mind, soul. I feel like a beach that has been eroded by the pounding of the surf for the past four years; washing over me and wearing me down with the energy of all vices, amplified by my own anger about what's happened. Like a beach, I need replenishment and renourishment. I feel the effects of stress, stress snacking, pain from my rotator cuff injury, too much screen time, looming deadlines, inadequate hydration, and too little sleep. Time for a change....

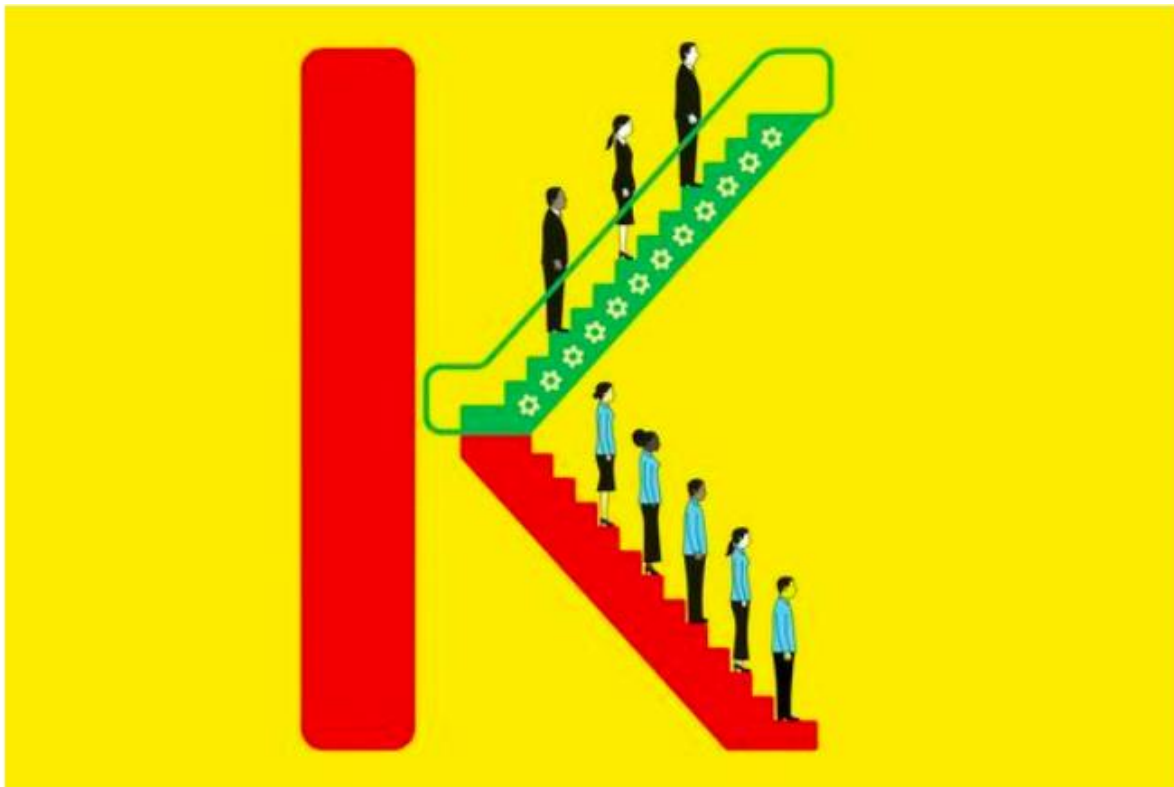
November 17th, I imagine that I have just arrived at my winter retreat here in Miami. I remember those first days when I arrived in FL from Chicago; how I let the sun thaw out my body and how good it felt. My body is tight and sometimes in pain. I am stiff from not enough moving and need to walk/exercise/move more. My diet has had too many snacks and the quarantine fifteen is in my future if I don't get a grip. My mind is not focusing well and I am easily distracted. My soul vacillates between peace and horror at what's happening. The world is spinning out of control. Sr. Mohini has said, stay happy, stay healthy, stay safe...emphasis on the happiness coming first. She is correct. Happiness comes from knowing who I am, realizing my great fortune, purifying the intellect, and THEN thinking and acting. Oftentimes, I get that backwards.

COVID is getting closer! It's a vicious cycle. Now, it's the social gatherings that are primarily causing the spread of the virus (not meat packing plants, businesses, schools)and it's the spread of the virus that is making social gatherings more riskier than ever before. I don't get why wearing a mask is still an issue. Today 87-year-old Chuck Grassley tested Positive for COVID. I wish him well knowing that he is among the most at risk. In my heart, I have not a jot of sympathy for any Republican anti-masker who gets the virus. Sad thing though, is that they will take many people down with them. Self-centered Trumpists! No concern for humanity...not even their own!

The virus has hit Patricia's condo, and here in Latinos-for-Trump-Land, hardly anyone wears a mask. What is wrong with these people? Many folks will NOT be denied their family Thanksgiving gathering and so the virus will spread unabated. Are they that unconcerned or just unaware? Or are they soooooo very gullible to the media's spin and the conspiracy propaganda? It's true we have a TRUST problem here in the USA....continuing to be fueled and funded by Trump and his enablers, sycophants, and the poor unwitting people who send their dollars to him.

The “high” of the election results has worn off. I believe that Trump and his band of merry (mostly) men (and a few blond women) will attempt to stay in the news and fundraise. But karma has a way of working out....and perhaps the NY AG will get to his taxes and dirty dealings after all. Trump is an instrument of destruction and will continue to play his role to perfection.

A brief rant about the economy...

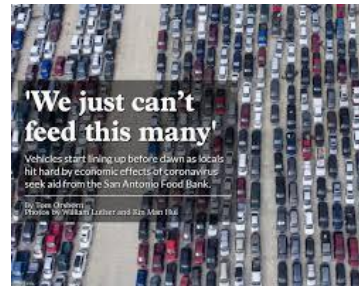


Covid-19 Is Dividing the American Worker

The rapid adoption of remote work and automation could accelerate inequalities already in place for decades. Economists say the resulting ‘K’ shaped recovery will be good for professionals—and bad for everyone else.
This is a what a K-Shaped Recovery looks like...30,000 ft view..



This is what a K-shaped recover looks like from ground level...



This concludes my rant for today....

Week 38 beginning November 22nd 2020: *Trump is in the rear-view mirror now.*

Covid rages unabated and people will NOT give up their 2020 Thanksgiving holiday. More than 1 MM people traveled on Sunday Nov 22nd. Wishing them all well, but frankly it's making things worse. I personally will forego even my drive-by visits...just to do my part. Easier for me than most...no kids/grandkids to miss and yearn for. Christmas could be bleak if all this moving around causes more spread....especially here in FL...the "don't care" State!

November 24th - Trump continues his legal shenanigans with hair-dye-dripper Rudy Guilani and all the other sycophants. Nothing comes of it and now...the GSA has "ascertained" and so the Biden transition team will be able to coordinate with career government officials. I hope there is some relief in the halls of the various agencies as those pols start to pack their bags.

I realize however that Trump will never go away as long as 70+ million people voted for him and he continues to master the media and create chaos and raise money and pay off his friends and retaliate against his enemies.

For me though, Trump is the rear-view mirror and I redouble my effort to focus on what I DO want vs. what I do not want. What I want: Peace and Harmony. I want a government that puts the least of us FIRST. I want a community that UNDERSTANDS and APPRECIATES the voices and views of everyone. I want people to feel SAFE and WELCOMED if they are suffering or fleeing oppression anywhere in the world. I want the United States to be a BEACON not a flame-

thrower scorching everything it touches. I want children to get the BEST EDUCATION IN THE WORLD, from pre-school to whatever level the student aspires to. I want a VIBRANT MIDDLE CLASS because that leads to getting along well, families flourishing, and communities where people feel a sense of belonging and togetherness. I want LEADERS WHO LEAD without greed, putting the American people above personal fame or fortune. I want Donald Trump to be tried and convicted of crimes against humanity at the World Court... and his legal karma to haunt him til the end of his days....not a very kind thought, but his actions will have consequences.

Since it's Thanksgiving week, I am sharing some of my daily gratitudes. For years, writing 3 gratitudes is part of my morning routine, along with meditation, murli class, 6-8 minutes of yoga, breathing exercises, voice exercises and some special reading.

November gratitudes; "Today, I am grateful for":

- The rain
- Our democracy
- Kamala Harris, Joe Biden, Stacy Abrams, Daniella Levine and those DEMS who lost their re-election campaign Debbie Murcasel-Powell and Donna Shalala and Jose Javier Rodriguez.
- My life and today's silence retreat
- My fortune and the tropical storm that has produced a lovely rain and perfect atmosphere for the silence retreat and a cozy weekend
- My spiritual family
- My body and my own beauty
- My loyalty
- My intellect
- My fortune
- My simple life
- Those who served in the military, for their service and sacrifice (especially my cousin Byron Seals who died in WWII at the age of 22)
- My health
- My apartment
- Cool breezes
- Sound of the wind chimes
- BK morning class
- Good health
- My friends
- Solitude
- Meaningful work to do
- Sunshine
- Balcony garden

- Time

November 23: a great interview by Sr. Jenna with Caroline Myss. Reminds me that even big-time spiritual teachers need a safe space where they can share their true feelings. Jenna did a great job with some deep questions about Caroline's mystical experiences...hard to answer but she did, nonetheless. It's about intimacy..." deeply intimate and yet profoundly impersonal" ...the experience of GOD.

I don't know where / I heard these things, but these are my notes thinking about "Me and White Supremacy" ...from a Black person's perspective. I think it was from the program with the young "Courageous Creatives":

Allow the in-depth impulse to be expressed

We must re-discover, re-find, and refine ourselves again.

Tell the truth about what's going on – not enough to just share my problems

We have to be in our bodies; it's the trauma that has defined us.

It will take love for ourselves, including loving the body. The body shows the soul.

Get in our bodies, love ourselves and others.

Find an affinity group; expose yourself without judgment.

When you realize what you have inside of you, you have to DO something.

God and the afterlife; let go of taking sorrow.

I know without a doubt that we have to LISTEN, not talk. Acknowledge that this has ALWAYS been a racist country. TWELVE generations of African – Americans have been exposed, lived under, lived with this reality. We must provide reparations. We must reform the police, the criminal justice, housing, employment, and the judicial systems. Each of us must DO something...even if it only means shutting up!

How I "woke": by **reading** some of the many wonderful accounts that have been published just THIS year; by **searching** into my own history and knowing that an un-named African American woman was in my father's household in Baltimore. He said he was raised by a Black "nanny." By **watching** the demonstrations/protests/riots in Baltimore and **knowing** that was the very neighborhood where my father grew up...an Irish neighborhood then...and a breeding ground for systemic racism. By **listening** to young 'courageous creatives' who shared their history and pain through their art. By **pausing** to recognize the scars people carry. By **challenging** statements like "I don't see race" as dismissive of another person's experience and not a measure of how tolerant a white person is.

In my work, I see the inequities of this sudden leap into the tech-driven life. My anger is draining me. What are the right actions, words, attitudes that keep me going and growing? Am I using the drama or fighting the drama? My advice to myself:

- Maintain my daily practice
- know that I am joining a huge group of people who have the thought/vision of a better world
- old things are no longer relevant and the change will happen
- at the level of thought, feel it's possible, and say "yes"
- all these elements are coming together

November 24th : Results of my 3rd COVID test are negative! Good process at Tropical Park. I'd say that we've got the testing procedure right, finally. Still too little testing and too much virus. I am waiting for testing to go UP and positivity rate to go DOWN.

Psychological responses to stress: depression (I want it to be like it was before) or anxiety (about the future, what will happen, become a worrier). Time to stay in the present, and only the present. Today, I am in a resort, the sun is shining, it is a perfect 80 degrees and I am writing / typing in this digital diary! Having a diet coke, doing laundry, tending the balcony garden, and now time to create a healthy lunch for myself.

Week 39 beginning November 29, 2020: *COVID-19 surges while Deeeeee-Santis fiddles*

For me, it was a busy week of zooming, huddles, hustles, consultas, preparing for Blanca and Gisela's return to Miami after 3 months in Denver, laundry, (container) gardening, BK zooms, Madam-Mayor Daniella zooms, meditations for those who are ill and have asked for prayer, and a Sat visit from Patricia for Kale burgers and a COVID-19 test at Tropical Park.

It was a full-on week, following on a full- on month of work and BK projects. Doing everything myself takes longer and yet I'm grateful for having meaningful work to do, a spiritual community where I feel I belong, and a comfortable and safe apartment in which to stay isolated. I have everything I need, and it's easy for me to reduce my exposure to the virus. I have tested 3 times, negative each time. I will continue to get tested periodically as every time I step outside my door, I put myself at risk in this environment.

My rant:

Things are bad and worsening in FL as elsewhere...but our Denyer-in-Chief, Governor Deeeeee-Santis (as he seems to call himself), resists the truth, casting his lot with Donald Trump, his favorite FL resident. Despite the fact that FL mayors have called upon him..."this isn't working"...he talks only about the vaccine with words that are too big for him to pronounce and which he has probably no knowledge of what they actually mean. He speaks NOW with such authority and feigned competence...almost as if HE were a lifelong scientist...eminently known

for his research and work on effective vaccines. It is both laughable and heartbreaking at the same time.

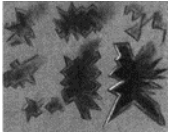
I live in an Hispanic, working class community. These are the Hispanics that support Trump, deny the virus and are anti-maskers (not all, but certainly the majority of Cuban and VZ residents, and a growing number of Puerto Ricans). It is a cultural and educational class sort-of thing. Listeners of Spanish language TV and the anti-socialist labels and the fear mongering, and without the benefit of a significant, cultural opposition to those falsehoods, claim they know full well what WE – the other side...gringos, socialists, communists, big government, welfare state advocates, rich, white people are trying to do... i.e. CONTROL them. Personal Freedom has become synonymous with selfishness, and opposition to “the other” ... even “the other” kind of Hispanic, i.e. not CUBAN. They have created a base for power, both political and economic...sadly few recognize that they have been able to do that precisely because of federal government policies, primarily of DEMOCRATIC administrations – from the Cuban Adjustment Act in the 1960’s to Medicare, Immigration preferences, the Affordable Care Act, Medicaid, affirmative action and set-asides. They have been the recipients of sooooo many benefits...and through a carefully crafted strategy many clever entrepreneurs have become wealthy. I don’t begrudge them their success, but they fail to recognize that it was GOVERNMENT SUPPORT that largely made that possible; the very government they are helping Trump dismantle....foolish at the very least. What are they trying to accomplish? What kind of a world are they trying to create? I have always criticized Miami for have a ‘center of the universe mentality’ ... like those old funny maps that made your city the optical center of the universe, while the rest of the globe was so very small...Miami took up ½ of the globe.

Thankfully, we have a new Mayor who sees the bigger picture, is a competent lawyer, one who comes from a community organizer background. The first woman mayor of the only major city founded by a woman. ‘Bout time. I always remember learning in my very early days in school desegregation, someone saying “The only time it goes to a woman is when things are soooo bad that no competent man will want the position.” (Emphasis on competent). And so it is here in Miami....a broken government, a pandemic surging with no mitigation to speak of, less than 25% of the person-power needed for contact tracing, and a don’t-care attitude toward staying home and staying safe (for those who are able to stay home)...and little concern for healthcare and other essential workers who MUST be out there to take care of the rest of us.

Sunday, December 6th: binge watched Queen’s Gambit on Netflix. Great story, happy ending. Story of struggle and friendship.

Planning to start anew with a new routine and some extra discipline.

Best Morning routine for me 6:00 – 9:00 AM. meditation/morning class, 2 min standing awareness, 6 min yoga stretching, 10 min breathing and voice exercises, write 3 gratitudes, read aloud for 10 minutes for voice, write in my corona diary...then breakfast..then...WORK til 1 or 2 pm.



Week 40 beginning December 6th 2020: *Metamorphoses*

Sunday, BG and GL return from Denver on the red eye. They will quarantine and then get tested for COVID-19.

Monday, December 6^h, I learned that a B-Care counselor lost a patient by suicide. They did everything 'right'; client was taking her meds, seen by counselor within the week, had been placed in an apartment, expressed that things were going well...and BANG...she hangs herself. And interestingly, it was 2 days after her neighbor down the hall did the same thing by the same means. Questions arise of a suicide pact or even a homicide. Offered support to counselor and was happy to learn that Borinquen has made free counseling available to their employees through their EAP program.

Wednesday, December 9th, went to PT for the first time in a month. Still dealing with rotator cuff tear and inflammation. Had the "4 hand special" MFR by Cynthia and her student Noah. They are a great team, and I know she will miss him. Cynthia keeps me moving and is an exquisite professional in every way.

Among my friends...PC is doing the full-on caretaker, housekeeper, tech expert, cook, social director, driver, bather, etc roles for her mom. I could hear the dementia setting in when I spoke with her mom on the phone. First time I really noticed that it was more than a slowing down...and a problem with hearing...it's the final miles ahead although the length of the road is unknown; she is 89. But thankfully COVID-19 has not found its way into their lives.

Friday, December 11th, is the kickoff of our silence retreat. I have been doing about 1 retreat per month and it keeps me going. The theme is "Secrets of Silence"....2 of my favorite words....now put together. Knowledge of the 'secrets' has engaged me in wanting to learn more. Silence, not just physical quiet, but in the mind, and the heart, is something to be cultivated...especially during this time. As things continue to decline, am I advancing as fast? I hear myself saying "this is how it starts...." Referring to my shoulder and physical complaints. Instead of resigning myself to it, I have to re-dedicate myself to my mobility and to my sanity.

I don't mind being alone at all, but it makes my world very small and I could get very 'funny in the head'...with my angry thoughts about the politics and the Republican horror show. Ailyn says it's like a Bosch painting..... Here's a good version:



I have to call AAA today: Acknowledge how angry, disgusted, sad, and a little intrigued I am; Accept the situation that we are going to hell in a handbasket here in the USA and that this is the predestined drama, and Activate myself to do the things necessary to keep myself physically healthy and mentally strong and spiritually centered. Amen!



Friday, December 11, 2020: SECRETS OF SILENCE: FL BK FAMILY RETREAT online with Sr. Denise

Opening meditation with Denise Lawrence – experience of the soul. This is the FIRST and LAST lesson: who am I? *I am a soul,energy....my energy, going out...and coming back....I am with myself, feeling it....like a point of light...BE that experience...then connect....point to point with the source of all energy...receive power, happiness, peace, silence....very natural...*

Sr. Mohini: What do you surrender first? Mind? Body? Wealth? Relationships? If the mind surrenders, everything follows.

Saturday, December 7th: Amrit Vela 4 AM; was pulled to remember many many people and send good wishes during this time.

Veronica's introduction of Denise was perfect and precise: Denise is a "lawmaker and lawbreaker; she can't be defined or confined". She is a pioneer in bringing meditation to the West; an adventurer; a communicator. And I notice that she is happy, more content, and

always incredibly deep and at the same time widely knowledgeable. Both deep and wide at the same time.

From today's morning murli class with Denise:

- “Remove Body Consciousness” – Denise suggests that this “includes all the things that divide us: gender, race, etc”. At the end, all the things that divide people will end.
- Remembrance means to take power and energy from God; my consciousness becomes focused and pure.
- If you want to understand silence, you must understand purity.
- Effort means doing something for yourself.
- Service means Karma with God; karma with God makes us move forward.
- Love as a Trustee; check my intellect.
- What is my stage (vanthprastha, retiring into a forest) and state of life (avastha)?
 - Weakness of attraction, fear/terror, wasteful games... Waste (viurt?), Powerful (sam-urt?)
 - What am I doing this for anyway?
- We are learning about the universe (Cycle).
- SwaRaj, independent, a king. If you want to become a king, remember Me alone (I take that as being a SELF-sovereign. Many people think we want to take over the world...).

Handling the Pandemic and collapse: This retreat is about Silence. Denise noted that “most BKs are OK alone-we are OK with our own company.” There may be long-term (psychological) damage from restrictions; doing everything alone is stressful. Busy yourself with karma with God and gradually let go of other people (no dependence). When people see collapse, they become afraid; we as meditators can contribute Silence. “Things look bad, but something good is also going on.” “We see what’s good and bad about it...ultimately we become neutral”. Be still/silent to respond proactively to the things that happen. Respond, handling it another way: using knowledge, powers, virtues. Handle old provocations in a new way. Prepare for the new reality: a silence, a deep silence.

The New Silence: Deep, Subtle...we have much to learn. The ‘secret of silence’ is that it isn’t being taken into a pure intellect. Deep Truths come from the mind of God and can only be held in a pure intellect. Truths, like milk, put in an impure intellect, will curdle.

Purity and Silence: We have to know how Purity is important. The most silent moment is just after destruction as all the souls return to the soul world. Nature sounds are often described as silence; not true. There are discordant sounds, cacophony. **When the soul is pure, there is nothing to say. Any thought or sound that comes from that soul is called silence.**

Swa-dharma ...Dharma is “shanti” = dharma of the soul. Dharma, the “state” of the soul, “what the soul IS”...energy, consciousness that doesn’t move...but has potential for thought, words, actions (when in a body). **“It is what it is”, a being, with power, in a state of quiet.** Soul

Consciousness = detached from matter, quiet. People are afraid of death and absolute silence when detached from the body.

Sonata (sp?)- the silence that fills the atmosphere when a great soul leaves the body. State of power where you “hold your peace” ...things provoke the soul into an action or response.

Practice: *I am the soul at peace...(practice what it is like to be in the soul world so we can let go of everything. Conquering matter and maya is what you do when you conquer the mind.)...I am genderless, colorless, cultureless, religionless (all the ways I can be provoked). We are asked to be in the body and serve in an avaykt way. If I dislike anything or am attracted, there is still a karmic account; I am still affected.*



Denise: We can have jivanmukta while still in the body and serving through the mind; when the mind is independent and you are “in your power” ...Purity, Peace, Love, Power, Bliss.

Yoga makes us full: Silence, Movement, Stillness, Purity, Power. Power is to “be able.” **We must rely on a pure mind to pick up Baba’s signals and transmit when things become extreme. “Our Practice is our Preparation”**

Finding Fault, Criticizing, Correcting: It’s difficult not to find fault (we can find out what’s wrong). The problem is that we get CAUGHT in what’s Right and Wrong.

The original state of the soul contains the entire cycle (all my stages). The rotation of the cycle contains perfection. “Reality” is this moment...we have to be “completely neutral.” One ‘secret of silence’ is that we can go to that stage of stability where we’re absolutely neutral.

We can’t stop the world; it has Time and Space. In Silence/Soul World, we are outside of Time and Space. Like the karmateet stage – there is nothing to do. **There is the urge to serve; to finish our debt. The stage of being karmateet – no debt, doing pure karma; only good wishes and pure feelings.**

People who take more than they need is because of some form of emptiness. If I know drama well, there is no need for the Fight/Flight/Freeze response. *I connect to the Ocean, pull God’s energy, we are full, we are free, we radiate.* This enable’s people to be “like” God: still, perfect, beautiful, unperturbed by anything. Be like Kalingdhar (sp?) – one who can “take it”. We are soooo influenced that we do what we don’t want to do.

Groups: (Why do we discuss? We put our minds together and get something new and interesting. Something important is hidden behind those intense feelings; releases blockages.)

Reaching a stage of no longer criticizing anyone, in thoughts or words. Can I during any 24-hour period not indulge in critical thoughts. We WILL have those thoughts; what’s wrong is to continue with those thoughts. Q: What provokes me to criticize? (A: rudeness, unfairness,

injustice, other's mistakes). **Ego defenses must be softened, but it's hard to do;** not look back, in front of whom?

We must use the knowledge of the drama to free ourselves from the sanskars of criticism.... modal words: should, have to, must, ought to . I view people as likely to do something wrong. I can get an angle on things through the drama.

Q: How is criticism and correcting operating in my life right now? Self-criticism too. I can be realistic but "taken over by it". (This is how I feel about COVID...realistic but not taken over by it.)

Practice: Mansa Seva, check my expectations, know my part in the drama, know the cycle, nothing new, make myself stable.

Worthy: The Sindhi word for worthy actually means "competence". What makes someone valuable? "Sincere love for God and Humanity." "Self-Confidence" is on the surface faith in yourself. Self-worth: deeper, knowing what is my value? What is my purpose? If I "go against what I am FOR", my value will reduce. Am I thinking about karma philosophy? Is there coherence with what God is thinking? "Swa-Raj" – free from other people's judgments. Be "right" with myself. Anchor myself with my chart.

Emotional and Intellectual responses: We don't want to be judged so we hide our feelings. Neither the emotional nor intellectual response is silent and causes pain to the self. The **Spiritual Response** has to do with activating the powers. We need powers and virtues – not to crush the feelings; that is not silence. Silence is quiet, deep still. Transcend: first go deep to understand and then go high to transcend. The **Emotional Response** is what you feel when your wound is touched, i.e., "frozen yogi". Let the emotional response go on and know that you can "position yourself" higher, on the Seat of Self-Respect. When you are in your power (Tolerance, Accommodation, etc.), you can go beyond the emotional response. NOT, "I am bad..." vs. "It happened...this is a scene in the drama...it left a mark; it left a wound..." Archeology of the soul...like a chart/map. **"Drama: you can't stop it...you can't control it...you can't change it."**

From the murli: As soon as you arrive in the boundary of Love, you are liberated from any type of effort. Signs of Love? The two merge and become one; absorbed in love. To become merged means to become equal. All relationships are with the Beloved; at the time of need I experience all relationships with the One. Is it on the basis of knowledge or the heart? "Only the Heart and the Comforter of Hearts know the experience of the heart." Merge knowledge in the head, and Love in the Heart.

Summing up the Retreat (Mary and Shireen):

- The surface manifestation of our sanskars is a constant chain of criticizing and correcting.

- To what extent do I live in the knowledge of the drama? (I realize it exists, it repeats, it is accurate, it is ultimately beneficial...but do I LIVE in that always? The answer is NO...I often want things to be “different”.)
- Everything you used to do and be is finished: God/Baba has given me a new life.
- Westerners tend to live in the “head”. We need the virtues of a spiritual warrior: patience, courage, and Love.
- “Swa-dharma” – the original state of being. “Swa-dharma-rakshak” (sp?) – I have to protect my own dharma.
- “Shanti” – pure, stillness, silence
- Drama – can’t stop it, change it, control it.
- Spiritual response – the more “reactions” I have, the better to know what’s going on inside.
- We need a Power, Virtue
- Know that Baba/God is sensitive to my pain. Baba/God want me to overcome this.
- Take a seat of self-respect. What seat do I need? (A: The seat of being God’s worthy child). Talk to Baba/God about it.
- Know that Brahma Baba went through this too. Feel the closeness to him.
- My emotional reaction is a blessing. What emotions are coming up? Why?

My experience: This was a journey from the head to the heart. Reminded that Westerners are head and Eastern philosophy is the Heart. Noted that Baba is speaking to the heart, not the head. An “Aha” from Shireen’s talk – “Emotions are good.” It is what it is.... Let go; allow the heart to connect and take power from God/Baba. Reason, logic, too much analysis can be crippling. Freedom and Liberation are my goals.

Denise: “The idea that we are going into a period of total negativity in the physical world is unbearable.” Focus on the Spiritual Laws, not the Physical Laws of the world. The spiritual law says the human spirit/soul is indestructible. There is living vs. dead silence. The soul is resonance itself. Try to make thoughts, words, actions into pure karma.

Week 41 beginning December 13th, 2020: *The Privilege of Denial is being taken away* (as the virus mutates and continues looking for bodies to inhabit)

News from the UK that the virus has mutated. Science writer Laurie Garret says there have been 4 mutations already.

Vaccine from Pfizer has started to be dispensed. Big contracts let to Big transport companies to ship to Big hospital systems...no thought of the ‘last mile’ into the arms of Americans. That – like everything else- has been left to the states. Here in the “State of Denial” will Gov Ron DeeeeeNialDeSantis, we can only hope for the leadership by the hospitals and mayors...

Dec 15th 2020, Sr. Mohini: "What brings strength to the soul? Create the relationship (with the ONE) and you will see the benefit. Change teachings into awareness...courage is always when you DO it. **Courage and enthusiasm are strength.** Keep increasing it with awareness.

Week 42 beginning December 20nd 2020: *Christmas Week*

December 22nd – End of year Financial Plan conference call with John Posey/UBS

Here's what I've learned and what I now think (opinion of a know-nothing)

1. We're in this til the end of 2023 (financially speaking). 10 Yr. Treasury is only yielding .9, a fraction of what the yield was in the 2008 recession. 2023 until unemployment returns to a better level = 4%. We have not seen the impact of the clogs in the pipelines for some careers among college grads; eg sports teams, hospitality etc. Took Maddie Posey 2+ years to land her job at the FBI...it's her persistence that paid off I think. Her character is what sells her!
2. Vaccine, low interest rates, good earnings among the companies growing during the pandemic, savings rate / M2 is up 24% (people have cash), stimulus checks all bode well. Unlike 2008 when stimulus went to the banks...this stimulus is "going into people's bank accounts."
3. I have a "Secure Fund" of 3 yrs cash of my bare bones budget which is \$24-30K. Total net worth just shy of \$1MM...I am one of the luckiest ones.
4. Updated my Financial Plan (monte carlo analysis) to reflect I'm still working.
5. My will, deed, DPOA, pre-need guardian, healthcare surrogate, 5 wishes are all completed and executed.
6. Inflation is likely (2022? 2023?) because of low inventory, slow production given the pandemic (furniture, goods).



Reflections: From the murli 12/22/2020: Don't tell anyone not to do devotion. Just see the soul. With divine vision, what existed in the past is seen with divine vision. Blessing: may you be filled with alokik attainments of the Confluence Age by swinging in the swing of supersensuous joy.

From SARK: "In what ways am I tempted to collapse into the negative?" A: When I hear about the rising # of COVID deaths. When I see people who don't care. When I feel weak.

Christmas Day 2020: Ho Ho Home Alone!

Like Thanksgiving, this is the first Christmas in my life that I spent totally alone (physically alone that is). Started the day however, with a Zoom Christmas with the Miami BK Meditation Center family. I appeared as Mrs. Claus once again...unable to join in person this year, but happy to be part of the gathering online. I understood – and appreciated – in a very new way, all the gifts of my life. And most appreciative of all the people who took the time to reach out and send greetings. Realized **how important it is for people to feel connected and a sense of belonging and know that they are loved and therefore loveable**...even when alone, isolated, sick, whatever. This was my experience in solitude...and it was wonderful. This was my Christmas Gift from the Divine: from the murli: “Your life is invaluable: therefore take a lot of care of the body.” Why does the soul remember God? A: For the inheritance. Don’t be lazy in your studies; remember the Father. God does service every day. Consider yourself to be a soul and consider all as your bothers.”



Was able to get together with PC for a post-Christmas celebration. Heartwarming to be able to spend time together...knowing how careful we are to manage Risk and Exposure.

Ranting and Raving: I find myself ever-so-critical of all those who “had to go to Santo Domingo”, had relatives they “had” to see at Christmas, who “needed” a vacation, who felt this was the “only” time to see family (after basically ignoring them all year), who travelled because they were “expected” at the gathering, or mingled “just because” they could. I am stone cold sober to realize that many people just don’t care...are willing to take the risk...willing to expose others...for their own convenience, pleasure, or need. Particularly in this community, the Hispanic culture of ‘gathering’ meant people would not be denied their parties. I fear that January will be a deadly month. While walking around the pond at Baptist Hospital to get some exercise, we encountered a fiesta with 12-15 persons, una caja de Cerveza Modelo, Maga hats, and NO Masks. The leader swore at me in Spanish, talking loudly on his cell. We notified security and they were chased away.... how utterly thoughtless and disrespectful of the people in that hospital – some of whom are dying of COVID – to have a party in the area made available to the community and patients’ families for walking and respite during these stressful times. It makes me mad all over again, just writing about it. I am working toward the time when I can be ‘neutral’ to these scenes so I guess I will be seeing many more of them in the days to come so I can practice a new behavior.

Week 43 beginning December 27th 2020:

December 28th: My Father’s 110th birthday! He died in 1980, 40 years ago. I am learning a bit more about his family through Ancestry. There was never any mention of his

parents/grandparents; he only said he was an orphan. I learned his mother's name from my mother who was not quite sure whether her name was Louisa or Wilhelmina. Here's what I've learned.

His parents were Louisa Wilhelmina Crowell (born in Marblehead, MA/1870-1918) and John Francis Shea (1864 – 1929). Louisa was the middle child with an older sister, Amelia and younger brother. Her mother was Emily/Amelia, who was listed in the 1870 US Census as being born in Saxony (a landlocked state in Germany). Her father was Freeman Crowell, who was born in Nova Scotia and in 1870 worked in a shoe factory in Marblehead. Her younger brother lived with her in Baltimore after she was married to John Francis Shea and had 2 daughters. My father was not yet born. They had a "servant" in that home.

New Year's Eve 2020: Solitude, Alone, Silent, Still.

Feeling the heaviness of the world's suffering. Feelings of anger rise....and fall.

Internal: still, calm peaceful, loveful

External: chaos, suffering, falsehoods, death.

Feeling the dichotomy.

Bits to remember as I pack my bag to continue this leg of the journey..."a journey to your soul, the journey home."

What does it mean to be completely healed? No more questions, no ill-will toward myself or anyone else. To embody the thought, but how to express it physically? "Take TIME out of the picture" (as Merce said). "Suffering ceases when you put meaning to it"; I have to actively look for meaning.

Week 44 beginning January 3rd 2021:

January 7, 2021: **"When the world goes crazy what can we say/do to give people hope?"**

Hopelessness is a huge signal for trouble ahead. As former Commerce Sec. Carlos Gutierrez said today on CNBC: "I'm optimistic about the economy, but not about our society", as if the two could be separated.

What I can do to give people hope, is 1) signal that each one is accepted for who they are now and who they can be, 2) remind people that they have likely met challenging times before and what was that inner strength they had at that time, and 3) to encourage careful attention to what is put in my body/mind/spirit – whether it's food, news, or people....each of these should ADD to well-being, not detract from it. On a simple level, less time spent with people who gossip, complain, whine, and more with those who share a positive outlook w/o being a

Pollyanna about things, those who make me feel good! And of course, if someone is feeling hopeless, unable to enjoy life, worried all the time, isolating, etc...seek professional help.

“What is the evidence that what we BKs are doing actually works? Certainly the effects at the individual level are significant: happier, less stressed, more understanding (and maybe compassionate) towards others, more resilient in coping with difficult situations, feelings of safety and belonging to a global community.

At the societal level, I think BKs are seen as being the ‘real deal’, ‘walking their talk’, ‘inclusive’, champions of human dignity and the environment, respectful and law-abiding, and with great capacity to embrace all peoples from all places. These are qualities that are foundational: Truth, Honesty, Respect, Acceptance...

January 6th Storming of the Capitol: Who would believe this could happen?

No words for this...

Week 45 beginning January 10th 2021: *Anxious for this country and our Democracy.*

Trump should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law for the crimes of the last 4 years: Family separation, profiting/emollients, selling secrets, loss of thousands of lives, abandoning his duties, and more....

Some thoughts:

Systemic Racism: There has been a systematic “erasing” and “rubbing out” of other people. BK “families” are not considered “families”. Even White Europeans were traumatized (e.g. potato famine).

Intersection of spirituality and writing: unlock the block I have in my writing. Introduce spirituality in my writing.

Week 46 beginning January 17th 2021: *“MLK and DLK and Mamala and Joe”*

January 17th: I am hosting the Miami BK Meditation Center’s online Meditation for World Peace today. These are my comments:

Welcome to the Miami BK Meditation Center - to a special observance of our usual 3rd Sunday Meditation for World Peace.

LET’S TAKE A MOMENT TO SETTLE OURSELVES AND PREPARE TO TURN OUR ATTENTION FROM THINGS OUTSIDE TO SPEND TIME REFLECTING AND FILLING MYSELF WITH SUBTLE SUPPORT AND SUSTENANCE FROM OUR TIME TOGETHER.

This weekend we commemorate the Life and Legacy of TWO great men: Martin Luther King Jr. and Brahma Baba, the Founder of the Brahma Kumaris.

Martin Luther King (1929 – 1968) would have been 92 on January 15thand Brahma Baba, known earlier as Dada Lekraj Kirpalani, died at the age of 92 on Jan. 18th, 1969 (1876-1969).

Although these men were born on different continents and lived during different times, they met many of the same struggles:

- being opposed by the government,
- being personally attacked,
- being denounced for choosing a path of nonviolence.
- Change was on both their minds...Martin Luther King was looking for social change, while Brahma Baba taught about inner change...and gave us the slogan “When I change, the world changes.”

These men also shared many of same qualities. They both

- Led by example
- Taught us about values of Truth, Compassion, Humility, Service
- And each had a VISION of a better world. In MLK’s last speech in Memphis he actually said he’s “Seen the promised land”
- Similarly, Brahma Baba also was able to see a better world.

I’ve heard our Director Veronica say on occasion, that the BEST way we can honor someone’s legacy is to choose one of their qualities and become like that ourselves.

So it’s fitting that we remember both of these incredible leaders and take their inspiration as we face the uncertainties ahead.

We’ve brought you a wonderful talk by Veronica McHugh tonight. Although it was recorded last year, it is even more timely tonight. You might even want to get a pencil and paper to take a few notes...

Enjoy this talk, fill yourself with these ideas about two great men,

Sr. Mohini’s classes:

Thoughts are seeds.

I can tell my state of purity by my thoughts.

Do everything with the power of silence.

Beautiful, powerful vibrations come from the power of silence – it's easy to trust someone like that.

While on duty during the day: practice introversion/silence/solitude/peace. Bodiless stage/seed stage/Peace.

Brahma Baba's words: "Be sure that the person who was famous as Lekraj has died. With whom should all relationships be made? With the One who is the Truth."

January 20th, 2021: INAUGURATION DAY

"Democracy is a matter of how we live together in this country."

I cried throughout the day and evening - watching all the ceremonies. Like many, I realized how LONG I have waited to see a woman at the highest position, or even VP. It is a milestone in the suffrage struggle, made easier bit by bit by women – and some men – who dedicated themselves to this cause. The whole day was inspiring: the pomp and circumstance of government, the oaths taken, the families, the Anthem sung by Lada Gaga, even JLo was good. The evening concert and fireworks from the Lincoln Memorial and the photos of the Bidens and the Harrises. But the show stopper was 22 year old Amanda Gorman reciting her poem. A young Maya Angelou.

[Amanda Gorman](#) became the [youngest person](#) to deliver a poem at a U.S. presidential inauguration, with the 22-year-old reciting her poem "The Hill We Climb" after [Joe Biden](#) and [Kamala Harris](#) were sworn in as president and vice president.

Gorman [spoke](#) for nearly six minutes.

Read a transcript of her remarks below:

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed*

*a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promised glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into*

*and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,*

*we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it*

January 22nd: the 35th anniversary of my 39th birthday (Do the Math!)

A quiet day, lunch with PC, and a first-run movie "News of the World" with Tom Hanks. Thoroughly enjoyed the day/week. "Make my birthday great again" was my wish in 2017 when I attended the Women's March. "Sometimes you have to put your body where your beliefs are" said Gloria Steinem to the crowd. Since then, we've lost our dear roommates Angie and Suzie and so many more now to COVID-19.

Week 48 beginning January 24th 2021: *Let's Get to Work*

Week 49 beginning January 31st 2021: *Changing my Personality*

Recently, our morning teaching mentioned something about 'changing your personality'. I began to think more about that. At the same time, I remembered Dr. McLeod calling me 'high strung.' Later, I was called a 'Type A' personality, and a few years ago Dr. Erdem said that if I didn't control my stress, I would kill myself by my own hand. This has been a long time standing; I have been vigilant from an early age. Not outwardly "high strung" or "Type A" or "Stressed Out", but certainly a vigilant, reactive personality inwardly.

I intend to change my personality, and COVID-19 is helping me become more grateful, quieter, less bossy, more introverted, and silent. It's about ego after all, and COVID has been a great equalizer. Below, from Fr. Richard Rohr:

When we presume we know fully, we can all be very arrogant and goal oriented at the expense of other people. When we know we don't know fully, we are much more concerned about practical, loving behavior. This has become obvious to me as I try to observe human nature. Those who know God are always humble; those who don't are invariably far too sure of themselves (which is different than grace filled self-confidence).

So, changing my personality involves not being a know it all, while at the same time, being full of self-respect. In that space, I am becoming more and more grateful for everything and every moment, more open, more vulnerable, more loving, stronger, more resilient, happier, and more content with what just 'is'.

Week 50 beginning February 7th 2021: *Feeling the After-Effects of the vaccine and aiming for graceful and functional aging!*

After 36 hours of feeling like I had the worst hangover of my life, I had a flight into health. For just that one day, I couldn't believe how well I felt – I even cleaned my oven on the 3rd day post-vaccine! Vaccine effects started about 12 hours post inoculation. Woke with nausea, dizziness, feeling faint when I got up so I just stayed in bed most of the first day...pain in joints and particularly my feet. Felt arthritis, fatigue, just plain crappy. On the second day I only had a sore arm and some redness. Now waiting to see if I get "Covid Arm" on day 8. Effects definitely stronger – and different – with second shot.

February 10th – third and final televisit with UM 2nd Year Med students James Roldan and Danny Gomez. What nice guys! It's a great service they do just to have these conversations with 'active elders'; they will be great doctors! Each time I volunteer, I learn something. This time, during COVID, it's been very helpful to have them to talk with about health and wellbeing.

They asked if I felt the quality of care had slipped. I don't necessarily think so, but some of my screenings have been delayed and I've not had an in-person visit for over 1 year. It's more of a do-in-yourself healthcare system now.

I asked myself this morning "If one day I woke up and there was no pandemic, what would have changed?" I asked them the same question. We all agreed. I think people would have taken this more seriously, behaved more personally responsible, and treated the environment and each other with more care and cooperation. They asked me what was my greatest fear going forward? I think it's fear of being hospitalized, fear of an exacerbation of asthma, and general physical decline.

I took some advice from them as future great docs:

1. They 'tested' me on signs and symptoms of heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer's. I passed the test, but I really haven't thought too much about dementia (not really my thing). So many active people are afraid, it would be great if doctors emphasized prevention strategies EARLY and not waiting until symptoms appear. Early sign is not being able to do ordinary tasks, short-term memory loss, personality changes. So many different presentations.
2. Focus on prevention: "no trigger events" like falls, traumas. Do everything to maximize my safety at home.
3. If there are small vessel changes, i.e. vascular reasons for dementia, but vessels are open, emphasize NUTRITION, GETTING OXYGEN TO THE BRAIN AND PERRIFERAL TISSUES, ENOUGH B-12, RAW GREENS, KEEP MIND ACTIVE, KEEP FIT.
4. "Dilemma of self-care: we need both a health AND happy lifestyle. Don't confuse self-care with self-indulgence." Main reason people quit diet is that we try to be too strict.
5. "the body uses what you eat to build yourself." (How will my body use that potato chip?)
6. Taking my Bottom Line from these docs: I want *"Graceful and Functional Aging"*.

Week 51 beginning February 14th 2021:

Sunday, February 14th was an auspicious day. Manda reading murli for our morning class, surprise song by Lucinda from the UK, and lovely sharing by the McHugh family from the North of Ireland. All for Donna's milestone B'day (70) and Manda's send off to India.

Taking this week to focus on re-conditioning myself. Have been feeling greatly fatigued, generally 'blah' and unmotivated. Some brain fog and general malaise. After further reading I understand that Moderna did not include data on mild and moderate side effects; only the severe side effects which looked very good safety and efficacy-wise. But as more and more are vaccinated, the anecdotal evidence is accumulating and suggests that moderate side effects are more common with Moderna. I did have the itching and delayed local reaction to dose #1. The 'after-effects' as I call them, lasted nearly a month...almost until I was due for the second dose. Now, I am at day 11 post dose #2. I have not had the itching and delayed local reaction as before, but this time it is systemic, having had the immediate local reaction (pain at the site, some itching, nausea and chills, significant dizziness during the first 35 hours). Now I am left with some dizziness, fatigue, fogginess. Ruling out dehydration, lack of protein, hypoglycemia, or other diet-related matters. Rebuilding my walking as I've hardly been outside much in the past year. Reading articles "is 2 hours outside the new 10,000 steps?" I think it is. Doing labs this week and will have telehealth with my doctor.

Day 13 post dose #2: had a fantastic session with PT Cynthia who did MFR and released the tightness in my L armpit...so painful; little did I realize that even now it was related to the vaccine in that arm over 5 weeks prior. Now learning that lymph node adenopathy is another side effect and that at least 1 cancer center is recommending waiting to get a regular screening mammogram for 3 mos after the vaccine...which I will do.

Day 14 post dose #2: MAGICALLY, the fatigue was GONE when I woke this morning. I attribute it to MFR and releasing any built-up toxins....

Week 52 beginning February 21st 2021: *Now What?*

Having reached the point of being fully vaccinated and past the after-effects of the vaccine, I ask myself "Now What?" What is the life I aspire to? Or am destined for?

This from my journal as part of the BK series "Exquisite Exchanges with my Future Self" (Jan 2021):

Day 1: My way of seeing will make things happen. "We are sitting in the early days of daybreak" (Dadi Prakashmani). Suffering is the stimulus to bring people closer to God. Have a clear vision of it. "These are the days of dawn." Experiences are closer than ever – "you can see the trees of dawn." Birds are chirping. The world is cleansed. Heaven emerges (Paradise, Garden of Allah, Satyug, Age of Truth, Golden Age, Land of Immortality.

I live eternally, abundantly, filled with treasures, orderly and harmonious with the laws of nature. Perfect systems. Now I am in my home – still, full of potential, close to my father.

Letter to my Future World:

You stand ready – and waiting

Already there if only I could see it

I hear the morning songs of the birds

I touch the soft grass – new, supple, dewy

I smell the earth – uncorrupted, full of nutrients to support the plants; rich, fecund soil

I taste freshness, sweetness, cleanliness in everything. Nothing is bitter or sour; yes, tart or savory, but never bitter or sour.

To prepare myself – I remove all sourness, bitterness, rigidity or harsh talking; singing only songs of wonder each day.

I see glimpses in everything now; I see awe in those glimpses.

The New World in a glimpse.

What I've learned during Black History Month:

By learning about **Charlotta Spears Bass** ((1880-1969), one of the few Black women to own a newspaper and the first Black woman to run for VP in 1952, **I am reminded that African Americans were not simply fighting for abolition, or suffrage, or civil rights over generations....but for their very PERSONHOOD.** Charlotta was a Republican (and later became an independent), a Progressive, called a Communist, and faced endless attempts by this country to strip her of ability to advocate for causes she believed in: peace, civil rights, equality, decent jobs.

By reading **Caste** by Isabel Wilkerson, I understood for the first time, the breadth and depth of that depersonalization from the very beginning of the story in 1619. We have the science of epigenetics that can confirm what it must be like to have that message passed down through a family for 12 generations. Can you imagine what that would do to a group of people?

Knowing just a little bit of the history of the African American experience in America and given this depersonalization over hundreds of years, I understand that the cultural stereotype of Black men as "absent" from their families, lazy, and leaving children "fatherless" has roots in the slave trade and has hardened over time with persistent structural racism. Similarly, stereotypes of Black women as sassy, aggressive, angry, domineering, emasculating - or conversely as "mammy" - serve as caricatures – not real people only furthering this lack of personhood.

Finally, from attending a Zoom conversation about Miami's art scene "Gifted and Black" hosted by **Miami MoCAAD**, I understand in a new way the deep need for Black artists and creatives to have their own space, to have a brick to call their own, where Black history and culture are celebrated and preserved. With 11 African American museums of the diaspora in Florida, it seems unfair that South Florida's philanthropists (save a very few) have never made this a community priority, especially given Miami's roots.

Finally, I believe in reparations. Having dehumanized African Americans for so long, we **MUST** first acknowledge our responsibility for this as White Americans. My father was born and raised in Baltimore MD, in the neighborhood where the riots took place in 2015 after the death of 25-year-old Freddie Gray. Injured by police while being taken into custody, he went into a coma and died two days later. Several Baltimore police officers were charged and ultimately acquitted. Seeing that neighborhood, knowing that my father was raised there by a Black "nanny" after his mother passed away in the 1918 pandemic, confirmed for me my own personal responsibility. That nanny's name was never mentioned to me by my father, but in the 1910 census Micuin (perhaps Marion?) V. Turner is listed as a 16 year old Black woman

living in the home as a “servant.” One hundred years, then to now, reminds me of my own family’s participation in perpetuating racism.

I was born in Evanston IL, now one of the only jurisdictions to have passed a law regarding reparations. Long considered a diverse community just above the Chicago City limits on the lakefront, Evanston has not solved the problems of Race in America, but has long been patient with “the questions themselves” as the poet Rilke says. If we – as White Americans – can look honestly at ourselves and acknowledge the parts we and our ancestors played, then we have a chance to put right what has gone so wrong for so long.

YEAR TWO

Week 53 beginning March 7th, 2021: *Feelings of Hope and Compassion*

We don’t know the stress we feel until it lifts. I felt a great sense of relief hearing that for the first time the number of vaccinated people exceeded the number of cases. According to the CDC, this means the fully vaccinated people (plus two weeks post vaccination) can gather in small groups with other fully vaccinated people...and without masks. How about that? Travel is still not recommended. This is a very big step. Still, only about 10% of the US population is vaccinated, but almost half of the “elderly”. Another 6 weeks or so and we should see big improvements IF we take personal responsibility for ALL of us by following the easy public health measures: wash hands, wear a mask, social distance, avoid large gatherings, stay outdoors as much as possible when gathering with others. Why has this become so politically charged? “E Pluribus Unum”...out of many, one.

March 11, 2021: Dadi Gulzar, Head of the Brahma Kumaris “left her mortal coil”, on the day celebrated in India as the birthday of God, Shiv Ratri. For nearly 50 years, she was the transmessenger, bringing ‘the message’ from a divine source in conjunction with the founder of the BKs, Brahma Baba. She is a great soul. On the night of her departure, there was a great pull to silence and remembrance. This is not unusual when a great soul departs. As forecasted, things are changing quickly. We must be stable and powerful in our own peace and power to keep ourselves safe and strong and to help others thru these times. As Denise has said we cannot get shocked and / or disillusioned; all these things are necessary parts of this time...even the sad and unpleasant things.

On the heels of Dadi’s leaving, I learned of Regina’s hospitalization following the shock of learning about the death of a young family member by hanging...triggering memories of her own son’s suicide...and causing symptoms of a heart attack. I feel this is the collapse she was never allowed to have after her own son died...and hope that this may be something of a

catharsis for her...that some new healing may result from this young woman's death. I want to turn Peace into Power to help her heal.

Each day bring so many new things to deal with – to absorb and find a place within to accommodate the news.

Wonderful show by Nicole Wallace/MSNBC "Lives Well Lived" ...celebrating the lives of more than 500,000 lost to COVID. No one has been untouched by this pandemic. With the new of the passage of the BIG relief bill and seeing Biden's steadfastness and resolve to get the pandemic under control, I am filled with emotion seeing the goodness and truth and purity of intention.

It is a mixed bag...relief, hope, light at the end of the tunnel, optimism about the possibility of controlling the pandemic, less fear of being terribly sick/hospitalized/death from this uncontained virus. My grandmother died in 1918 during the pandemic..." pneumonia" they said...

**Week 54 beginning March 14th 2021: "This is a time for optimism, not a time for relaxation."
(President Biden)**

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day...NO PARTY! 😞

March 18th: We hit the 100MM people vaccinated! Biden did it! "And it was HARD"... Deciding what's next for myself. I think I need to begin to re-socialize myself: i.e. socialize ONLY with fully vaccinated people. And will wait for the 4th surge following all the Spring Break and foolish relaxation policies. Still hoping that each person will take some personal responsibility for stopping the pandemic. Even if someone had COVID and has taken the vaccine, we still don't know if they can transmit the virus. "Things may get worse, as new variants of the virus spread." Waiting to hear that we will likely need a third booster for the variants...

Week???, beginning August 29th, 2021: “Fresh Start”

Where have I been for the past so many months? Right here...same old same old.

My optimism has been dampened by the 4th surge of COVID-19...now the Delta variant has made FL the worst it has ever been – despite the vaccine. Why? It boggles my mind, but I guess it's 1) not enough people vaccinated, 2) opening up too much too soon, 3) more gatherings and moving around, 4) a “don't care” attitude among our populace.

This article describes [ME now](#). “What to do with our COVID rage?”. Sarah helps with these suggestions: Turn anger into action; don't focus on the “spreadheads” (unvaccinated conspiracy-minded Republicans in Southern states); focus on changing the “systems of power that made our grim national death count the only plausible outcome....a caste-based society that exalts individualism and prioritizes profit over wellness...”

I am recommitting to what's important to me at this time...including this journal. I am at the final third of life...more memories than eager anticipation of life ahead. This is it...and as my dentist said of my teeth...‘so far so good’...feeling good that I did not need any dental procedures...this time.

What's important to me is my “faith” (not religion); my spiritual life (not just a basket of spiritual practices that I do); finishing my work-life on a high note by winding things up well and making a final contribution with the impact study; being a good friend to a few; and most importantly recognizing myself, appreciating myself, preparing myself for the journey ahead...to leave my body with God's words in my mind and heart, welcomed by the ancestor souls, and a feeling of “well done, my special child”...

But there is ‘much to do before I sleep.’

Week ???, beginning September 5th, 2021 – Naples, FL – “Cha-cha-cha-chaaaannnnges...”



Friday, Sept 3rd, Gayatri was in town and tied my Rakhi. Very special Rakhi and a very special blessing (and assignment):

Baba sees your childlike innocence. His pure love has transformed your nature and outlook. Your face is sweet, and your vision is pure. You welcome all scenes of the drama with an attitude of optimism and enjoy the playful games of life. With Baba as your companion, you dance towards the finish line with ease and grace.

I'm always attracted to the innocence in others, but now know that it's a reflection of my own innocence. From today's murli, “Consider yourself to BE, what you know that you ARE.” I see

it in the behavior of others, but not so much in myself. I feel the weight of experience and the lost innocence of childhood.

Big change in my “outlook” while in Naples – a big ‘reset’. From the beginning of the pandemic, I aligned with Nancy Pelosi who said we must “crush the virus”. That meant that I personally must do everything I can to keep myself safe (and not a burden to anyone, nor to the medical and hospital systems). Secondly, it is my duty to do what I can to stop the spread and protect others and be a proper example of a responsible citizen/resident/member of my community. I feel good that I did my absolute best; stayed well, stayed safe, stayed sane for the past 19 months. But we FAILED to crush the virus. And now, the thought is that COVID is an endemic virus and we will have to “live with it” as some conservatives said even as 600,000 people in this country have died. The number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in FL have soared. Our positivity rate is higher than ever, even WITH a large number of people vaccinated in Miami-Dade County.

But my outlook has changed: this is an endemic; we are all exposed and being showered with virus every day. There is no will to lock things down again and the economy couldn’t take it. Mindful of the inverse relationship: as things open up, mitigation efforts must be tightened, not relaxed. There is a fallacy in thinking that ‘opening’ means it’s over...quite the contrary as the public health data attests.



While walking on Naples Beach I spotted a perfect sea clam mollusk shell. When I picked it up it was very heavy and had black on part of its shell. I wondered if that was the original marking until I realized it could come off and was probably tar from the bottom of the Gulf. I felt sick thinking of the oil rigs and the tar and pollutants that have been released into the Gulf. That clam was weighed down by the tar as it dragged its poor little self until it couldn’t any longer, ending washed up on the beach. I felt sick inside.

My talk to myself: there is so much pollution and “dirt” in the world now. I am trained to see it, I even look for it in my work and even in myself. As Kathy Tritschler once told my mom: It’s a dirty world Mrs. Shea”. My mother constantly

cleaned, it was her way of dealing with ‘life’ and ‘dirt’.

“See the dirty shells, but don’t pick them up. Send good wishes to the oceans, all the elements, nature, and even those who were responsible for the tar.”



Instead, look for, and see the beauty in everything.

Clean whatever I can...like my mother.

Week ????...September 11th: 20th Anniversary of 911 and “Meditation for David”.

911 is still raw, even 20 years later. The grandchildren of those who died were part of the memorial. The firefighters and first responders are forever scared, and their stories are a way to cope with the horrors they witnesses.

Gayatri’s inspiration to do a Zoom meditation for David inspired everyone...and nice to “watch love grow” as Gayatri said. David’s wellbeing and light was shining. You would never know he was a man with bladder, lung, bone, and brain cancer with only a short time remaining to this life. He lifted us all up. How honored and lucky and grateful I am to be in his world at this time. This is how life with a pandemic / endemic and impending death can still be beautiful. May he have many more beautiful moments on this earth before he goes home.

Week ????, beginning September 12th: “Goodbye Hair”



Monday, Sept 13th: *Got a haircut! Less than 10 people in the shop, but I was anxious and mindful of the children, men who pulled masks down to talk on their phones and being in a gathering of strangers no matter how polite and social. Matteo, about 8 years, was teaching his little brother to pray and do the sign of the cross. They were wearing their school uniforms from the Catholic school in the area. They dropped the prayers in favor of a duel with their lollipop sticks while dad got a haircut. Nice to see the three “men” enjoying normal life again. I immediately felt lighter and more normal too.*

Yes, I was exposed to God-knows-what (or not), but I kept my exposure to a minimum, < 1 hr, kept 10+ ft from everyone but the stylist, and of course KN95 mask and no touching anything. This is life in an endemic. Grateful that I can have a haircut.

Thursday, September 16th: “Goodbye Aleksander Alembert” who left his body suddenly from a heart attack. I was initially shocked but had a positive thought “Good for you, Aleks!” In meditation I remembered his innocence, his pure belief in a royal future for himself, and how the last time I spoke with him at Barry’s funeral, he seemed a bit like a lost soul. Remembering him in meditation I glimpsed the abundance of love he was experiencing and sharing.... he IS love now...the love he always wanted. Knowing how he spoke with Gregg while in the

ambulance, knowing he died in the company of his brother firefighters, and how in that instant a lifetime of karma was settled leaving only love. I am getting closer to understanding death in the most beautiful way.

Week ????, beginning September 19th: “Peace Week”

Sunday, September 19th: Third Sunday program with Diane Tillman speaking about Living Values and offering advice to parents about children and back-to-school issues. I asked her about all the ‘adult tantrums’ I’m seeing these days. She offered how dangerous it is for children to be exposed to parents who are losing it, showing angry displays and modeling hateful behavior (even if they think they are doing it for a good reason) damages children, despite their natural resilience.

Tuesday, September 21st: International Day of Peace: “Peace Day All Day”. Full day of meditations, programs, and a culminating program featuring Pema Reid (Dream Catchers for the Soul) and artist Raimundo Travieso. Very moving interviews and day in general. Starting with a memorial for Aleks and many beautiful memories shared by BKs, his family and friends. Viola Davis interviewed by the Peace Studio left me in tears. She shared such raw experiences...feeling like a Roman Gladiator her whole life, painfully shy, growing up in poverty, never feeling pretty, and more...all of this despite her professional successes.

Week???..... beginning October 23rd: *Too Much Death*

Monday, October 25th: Is the whole world crazy, or is it just me? Time is flying by, and every day is “Blursday”. I ask myself each morning “How am I?” I check in with my body...usually tired, stiff, achy, or even with some pains...and give myself the time to do my stretching, breathing, and voice exercises before starting anything else. I thank God for the morning routine of meditation and murli class, and the connection to the BK family near and far. By the time I’m street-ready, it’s almost 11 AM and I’ve had a full day!

But there is too much death. Today was Aleks’ memorial service at Coral Gables Congregational Church. What I took from Aleks life is that his heart was always open and that he “lived his dreams” as one firefighter remembered. He was ‘searching for love in all the wrong places’, but in the end his own love took him home. He touched many souls in lasting ways. I also learned of Connie Downey’s death...young but immunocompromised. She was bright, positive, talented, always cheerful, and a joy to be around when she was in my classes at UM. Her memorial service will be next month at Fairchild. Meanwhile, David Calhoun is in transition but not quite ready to leave. Got the news that Marcia Fair had another fall and is in the hospital.

Prognosis is uncertain. So many have left or are heading home since the day Dadi Janki led the way on March 20th 2019, and the whole world changed.

Tuesday, October 26th: Humid, rainy (fall?) day in Miami. I am grateful I can stand erect and listen to the showers falling on the trees outside my windows. Each shower brings a stillness to the freneticism I feel around me. My eyes have filled with tears nearly every day for months...on hearing the sad news of another person's passing, on seeing President Biden's optimism and true belief that we "can do anything...anything...if we do it together", when I see the calm determination of "some" political leaders to do what's right despite the personal risk or cost (Tx Dems, 1/6 Committee in the US House, so many Black women who are speaking out, our own Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine-Cava, and countless young activists, environmentalists, advocates and others who are moved by their values and convictions to make the world a better place).

Week ???..... December 13, 2021

This reminds me of the early days of the HIV virus...it was important for people to "know their status" and be cognizant of not spreading the virus to others. That required massive and complex behavior change, rapid testing (which we still do on street corners, with homeless and substance abusers to stop the spread), and medications to suppress the virus...and 40 years later, we still haven't ended AIDS. I think COVID is following much the same pathway.

December 29th 2021: *My Last Entry...for now*

Today would be my Father's 111th birthday (John Howard Shea, 1910-1980). I began this journal because HIS mother, my paternal grandmother, died in the 1918 pandemic. I obviously never knew her, nor did he know his mother. She died when he was 8 years old; his father sent him to boarding school, and I think he never felt properly loved. He said he was raised by a "Black nanny", who I see from 1910 census records as best I can make out was Micuin V. Turner (16 y/o Black). She was absent by the 1920 census. His father, John Francis Shea (1864-1929) died when my father was 18. My father had two older sisters, but he always described himself as an orphan. Seems fitting to end this journal on his birthday.

It is COVID-19, but here we are at the start of 2022!! "Who'd a thunk it?" We are on the brink of losing our Democracy, the US workforce has been decimated, public health has become a political cause, women continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic in our economic struggle, healthcare, education, and every other aspect of life. Soon we (the USA) may descend into chaos/anarchy and frankly reap the rewards of our years of excess and aggression around the world. There is virtually no place in the world today where one could live safely, with clean water and clean air, and with food and a sustainable environment.

My spiritual life sustains and informs my outlook. For those who believe in karma, reincarnation, and cyclic time...this all makes sense, awful as it may be. This is the time of settlement and of making us strong if we see all these situations as 'tests' of character. I have been made to confront my many "opinions", "judgments", and "criticisms" of others. I've cut people off for their political beliefs and built walls when I felt people wanted too much of me. I've lived a life of resistance, and it's time to change all that. I start the New Year with a resolution for my own "Emotional Sobriety". No more emotional drunkenness, no matter what.

I believe in reincarnation and link karma to that...I've had unexplainable attractions and rejections and situations that only make sense in a larger context of many births. Pandemic time means every day is "Blursday" and I've tasted the awareness that everything happens simultaneously in some whirl of energy, but in an accurate way (even if I can't see or understand it). The pandemic is culling through the population, extracting millions from this earth...a 100-year cleaning it seems. The world belongs to the Gen Z'ers and beyond, even as we boomers live with our fears about both physical and mental health.

What is next for me? Well, I will finalize my retirement date as 9/29/2022, the end of the federal fiscal year, after about 60 years of working steadily and supporting myself. I am re-imagining myself as a writer and scholar, a dancer, a reader, and one who loves solitude and silence. After all, the pandemic brought this opportunity to live in a different way, one that suits me. No more striving, no more working for money, no more need to "accomplish" anything. Just having time to reflect, learn, write, move, appreciate every moment, is – for me – approaching Paradise.

I don't know exactly what my grandmother Wilhelmina Louisa Shea (nee Crowell) would have said about her times in the pandemic, but I hope that when she died at age 48 of "pneumonia", she would have also been optimistic about the future of her 2 teenage daughters (my aunts) and my father (her youngest and likely her favorite child). I also know she would have been very tired caring for her family at 2924 Windsor Avenue in Baltimore, MD.