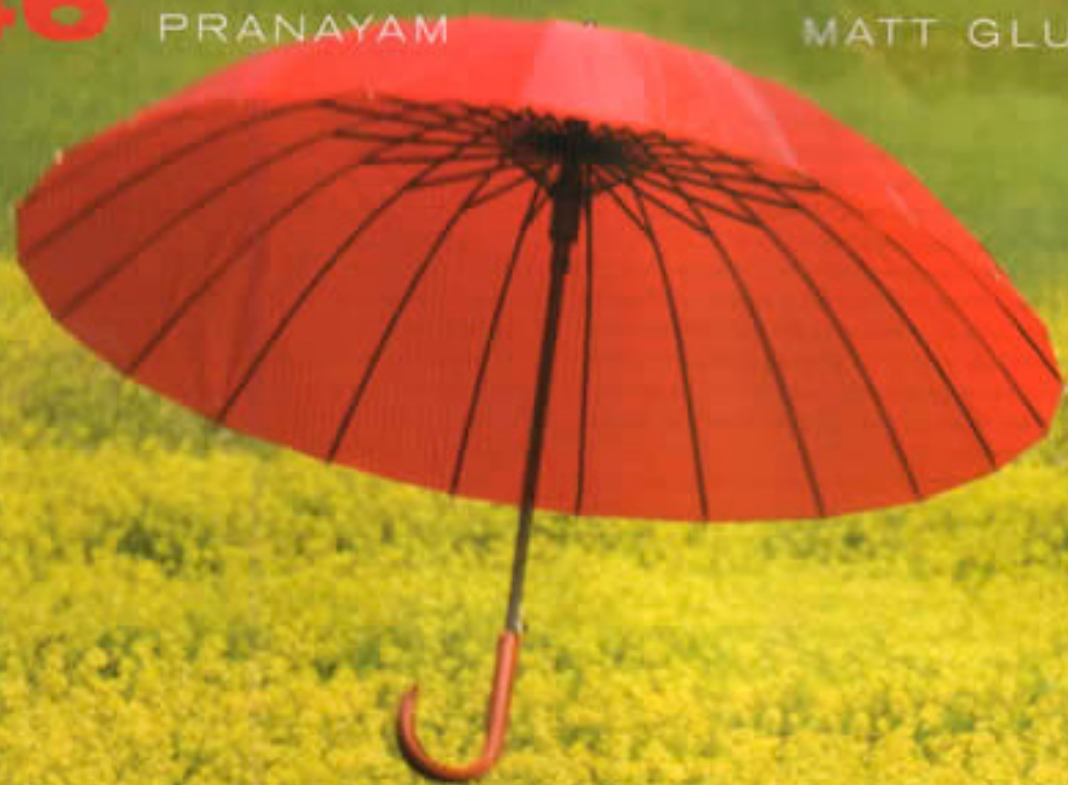


46

PRANAYAM

MATT GLUCK



As Nature Intends

Every day the body comes and goes. Some cells die and others are born, as quantum particles dance in and out of existence. Our experience of life can be, "This is all so real" and in the next moment, "My God, it's all a wash of cosmic illusion!"

These tiny particles, mostly comprised of "nothingness" hold a memory.

Moksha or Liberation, is about understanding that we hold the key to this memory.

In fact we ARE the Key. How humorous is that?!

Every time you breathe in, you regenerate yourself.

Every time you breathe out, you let go of that which you no longer need.

Isn't that beautiful?

Awareness provided by consistent breathing practice "releases" us to the truth that we have mistaken ourselves as ONLY the thoughts in our mind, many of which are projected into it from the outside world and all are from the past.

"I must have a new car."

"I must be slimmer."

"I need to change" or "I need some excitement!!"

Life reveals that the TRUTH IS and although our perceptions of it may change like a setting sun, it never does.

This truth is the awareness that we are that root awareness, knowing, feeling and thought "I".

I am, I go, I like, I should, I shouldn't etc.

This centring or abiding in your "I" self is the destroyer of death. It is the end of living a life to please others. It is following the Yellow Brick Tao, living in this moment of now, wherein we access immense creative potential.

We have seen so many times in history, how one person changes its course. The reality is that we all have this effect, as we are all ripples in this great ocean of existence. Everything that you do, changes those around you. Whether you deem your thoughts and actions as positive or negative, you are always affecting those around you simply by being here.

As this awareness grows within, you begin to experience that you are not your body, mind or ego. All of these things are

within you and act as your interface with the world.

Regular practice will help you to develop these skills if these all quite new to you.

Many people say that they are totally disconnected from their bodies. They have spent most of their lives living in their heads. Conscious breathing will teach you how to integrate your awareness throughout your being. It will allow you to incorporate the dark with the light.

Holistic is non-exclusive and the sum is greater than its seeming parts.

As you progress within, you will recognise these feelings and experiences arising internally and they will help to determine that your true nature is one of perennial fearlessness and JOY.

After you have finished practicing either of the exercises allow yourself a few minutes to centre. Continue sitting or lying still if you need to move then do so without concern. A few minutes complete rest will help you to absorb and centre the effects of your session in readiness for the next moment of your day.



MATT GLUCK embodied Pranasana Yoga as a way to enjoy and share life with others of like-minded heart. Matt is a British Wheel of Yoga and Life Centre qualified teacher and mentor, helping yoga teachers in

training. He has been teaching Chinese martial arts, including Tai Chi and Qi Gong, and Hatha Yoga for 22 years.

Matt teaches in classes and privately in Hertfordshire and London and runs workshops and retreats every few months. Most of his free time is given to sharing and discovering the yogic way with friends, on a day by day and moment by moment basis.

He has just written his second book and DVD series, *How To Breathe*. For more information, please visit www.pranasanayoga.com or email yogamatt@pranasanayoga.com.

Exercise 1.

- SIT or LIE comfortably and OBSERVE YOUR BREATH for a few minutes. You can sit on the floor using supports (e.g. cushions, pillows) or in a chair if that is more comfortable. When lying down, you may wish to support the back of your head with a cushion.
- Make sure that you are warm, with a pleasant room temperature, and that the air is as clean as possible.
- Observe your breath as it is. Notice that you are aware. If you have wandered, notice this when your mind returns to the presence of being.

Exercise 2.

- Listen to your breath for a couple of minutes and OBSERVE ANY PATTERNS that are present. Become aware of your mind. Observe the cyclical nature of your breath and if this alters due to your attention.
- Let go of any attempt to control or shape the breath in any way, especially if you have previous experience at this kind of thing.
- What are you aware of? Whether it is the breath, the body, mind, memories, or energy in motion (E-motion), allow it all to be.
- Whether you feel joy or discomfort in

any part of your being, be attentive to your level of awareness. Such presence reveals in itself and enlightens your consciousness to its unnecessary sufferings and delusions. Life then unfolds as it really is; ever new joy is revealed from beneath the mirage which we have superimposed upon it.

- Trust that your experience is unique to you, whether or not it is similar to what is described here.
- Trust that your body, in its present condition, is your greatest teacher as it reflects part of the nature of your soul.
- Listen effortlessly, so that you can interpret the messages it is giving you.

Nature intends in accord with the Divine Will. This is like saying "as we think, so we become".

The purpose of Breathing Practice is to facilitate the realisation that mind is enlivened by awareness, which is its source. This awareness, your deepest self, is often termed "I, soul, consciousness, God," or any other terms that you choose to name it. There are many benefits or fruits along this road, which include improved health and vitality.

With this perfection, whether in the form of a fleeting moment or permanent abode, is the realisation that the Soul is one part of the All, of which it always has been and, will be. This "has been" and "will be" both exist in this present moment, as being and time can only occur Now.

This presence always was. It is prior to the senses, informing and animating them, aiding us through life's day.

The more aware you are, the more easily you can see that your mind and body are inseparable. What affects one is seen as an effect in the other. We use the expression "mind over matter", implying that mind governs the course for the body's reaction, whereby cells recreate themselves based upon memory.

When the mind and the senses are focused inward toward their source (awareness), there arises a still point of focus which gives rise to a state of concentration.

Attention to breath enables this distillation, and awareness of "I" purity emerges. This takes place as the senses withdraw from external appearances (disturbances) and consciousness releases the mind away from internal fantasy. Unsullied awareness remains.

This further gives rise to the understanding that awareness, which we experience and express through the term "I" is all that there is. The gift of humanity is self-consciousness and the relevance of our journey is to re-establish this awareness. This is opposed to weighing ourselves down in "our story", which requires the constant maintenance of internal dialogue. We know that Energy "is" without birth or death and that it transmutes. The only way that it can do this is via awareness or consciousness.

Through the prolonged practice of concentration, all faculties – namely senses, mind, ego and intelligence – are all reabsorbed into their maker. This meditation, within and towards the true self culminates in total absorption. It is a state of stillness and utmost peace. It is beyond the mind. It is harmony with everything.

In the spinal column, within the spinal cord, we have what is known by the mystic traditions as the central channel: Sushumna Nadi, or the Gracious Path. We could term this a non-physical thread of light. This channel contains the core energy. It is also known as the "Thrusting Channel", "Pillar of Light", and various other names coined by traditions through-

out history. This central axis brings life into and animates the physical body and three-dimensional earthly existence. It is like a wish-fulfilling tree or Jacob's ladder. It leads to peace.

When the mind is still for extended time periods, when the energy remains within this central core for long enough and, when this is combined with an understanding of the greater good, (humans are a collective working towards the same cause) a total absorption or alignment with the inner self is achieved.

This is a description of the higher stages of practice. That excludes about 99.9% of this planet. However, the saints and sages describe this for us so that we have something to aspire to. This is so we can experience life as humans rather than animals. The sages of past and present also remind us that we contain the exact same Divine Fire within us. Life includes choice. We can focus the heat of this flame inwards and upwards to our Divine Self, which is permanent truth, or allow it to dwindle with insatiable passion for this wonderful yet impermanent world.

To be free, means that we reach a state of non-duality. We know that we are "in this world" and don't attempt to avoid ghostlike manoeuvres. We embrace it fully, knowing that we are the source of joy that we experience through earthly matter, via our senses, mind and intellect.

In those moments of freedom which we all experience from time to time, the mind is still. We are often not even aware of our body. We feel "a part" of everything around us. We feel that we belong. We feel at home. There is no longer any sense of separation or being "apart".