

T H E
S A T T V A
L I F E

I am my own greatest teacher.

I recently took off solo for a few days of silence. The experience was simple, yet totally profound. It provided the space for me to more deeply understand the Yogic concept that ‘I am my own greatest teacher’ and also experience how prolonged periods of silence allows for sage insights into our own personal evolution to emerge. The purpose of what I’m sharing here is not to present exactly what I did so that you can follow it diligently, but to give some suggestions, possibilities & ideas so that you can feel into what is right for you. We all find ourselves in very different life situations & are at different points along the path. We may be in a period of feeling stagnant, totally connected, in turmoil, at crossroads, at a point of growth or anything in between. The process begins by turning our attention inwards, tuning in & starting to listen. Deeply. I am my own greatest teacher, as are you. Start to believe this with your whole heart and watch the magic unfold...

the space.

The location for your solo retreat can be anywhere. Of course, it's always good for the soul to be immersed in nature. But really, what we're looking for is a place where we can be alone & uninterrupted. I stayed in a family holiday house, but next time I'll give camping a go...

to pack.

Not much. The idea is to uncomplicate & keep things very simple.

Clothing – just the bare essentials.

Yoga mat & meditation cushions

Notebook & pen

Candles, incense, sacred ritual items... any other special items that are personally supportive.

Inspirational reading: Bring a few books that feel right. I highly recommend *The Untethered Soul* and *The Surrender Experiment* by Michael Singer. Most anything by Deepak Chopra is great (particularly some of his older works) & our teacher Anand Mehrotra has written two amazing books (*This is That* & *Liberation*) which are excellent if you want to go deeper into the teachings of Yoga.

to eat & drink.

I think clean vegetarian is a great idea. Simple, easy, fresh. Nothing too complicated. I also brought a block of organic fair trade milk chocolate, because it's one of the joys of life! Lots of plain hot water for cleansing effect. No alcohol. I had a coffee each morning but you may want to miss this if you find it too stimulating.. Again, use your intuition here.



to contemplate.

I'm going to list some different suggestions here. I recommend that you think of them as a starting point for what you may want to explore – or a launching pad into something completely different and unique to where your heart is calling you.

In my experience, we all have that thing, or those things, that we don't really want to look at. Why? It's too painful, shame-filled or perhaps reinforces this feeling of unworthiness deep inside. The problem is, we can ignore this pain/fear all we want, & keep coming up with clever ways to dress it up or avoid it, but it remains lurking beneath the surface. We know it's there because we're constantly being triggered by life's day to day experiences.

Think about the times when you're triggered, defensive or have strong aversion. Feel into that in your heart space. Dig deeper and consider all the different times in your life when you have felt like this. Dig deeper and look for the root. What is the core belief we have about ourselves that is the source of this trigger? I found that my faulty underlying belief was 'I'm not enough'.

After meditation repeat to yourself, either aloud or silently **I am not my thoughts, I am not my body, I am not the opinions of others, I am not my job, I am not my relationships, I am not my pain, I am not my likes/dislikes, I am not my story.... Who am I?** Repeat this as many times as you need to until it really starts to sink in at a deep level. Then you can sit in silent awareness and see what arises from the field of consciousness. Be patient & present. It is possible to have some really profound realisations when we ask the questions & listen for the answers. Remember we cannot force anything to happen. We can have an intention, but must surrender the outcome. The answers may be immediate or arrive over the coming weeks, months...

Any tension we feel (during practice or in our day) can be used as an entry point into understanding what controls us. Where is this tension coming from? Go deep into it, watch it, be with it, don't be so quick to label or push it away.... give it time to unravel. Stay open & breathe into the heart space until the tension subsides.

Where do I find resistance & tension in my life? Explore this. Particularly looking at what we can learn about ourselves here – as opposed to shifting blame/responsibility to others. What keeps coming up for us? – jealousy, avoidance, insecurity, competitiveness, comparison to others, shame, anger, distrust, helplessness, lack of authority/power, no energy...

Where do I see areas for my growth?

What kind of life do I want to live?

Contemplate on what happiness & joy really is. Is it something that can only be experienced when we get what we want....or is it an internal state that can be cultivated, totally independent to what's going on in our lives.

What are my natural gifts? Art, communicating with people, sport, anything creative, cooking, writing, working with animals, gardening.... How can we make room in our life for more of this?



to practice.

Meditation – if you don't have a practice there are many apps or online resources to get you started. But as you know, we highly recommend you establish a daily meditation practice as it is without doubt the foundational practice for all others - otherwise we're putting the cart before the horse. The deep contemplations I have outlined above, are more accessible to us when we have experience with the field of awareness beyond the noise of the complicated mind.

Yoga – asana. Learn the Surya Namaskar sequences if you don't have your own practice.

Breathwork / pranayama : very powerful for moving stagnant energy and creating the possibility for deep release of old repeating patterns.

** If you would like a **personal practice** I can tailor one for you during a private session online or in Avalon.

Reading

Walking – being present to surroundings / contemplate what is unfolding for us.

Writing – you don't have to keep it. For some people writing is a potent technique for releasing & processing.

Speaking aloud to yourself. You're alone so you can do what you like. Speaking the unsaid is very powerful. Particularly empowering if you feel like you don't have a strong voice. Open up the possibility to be heard within this safe space.

Dancing to music that moves you – can be uplifting, energising or heart opening...

Napping

Watching the **sunrise** and **sunset**.

to be mindful.

Use your time mindfully. Try to remain very present. Taste each mouthful of food. Notice the warmth of the water when washing the dishes. Feel the sun on your face.

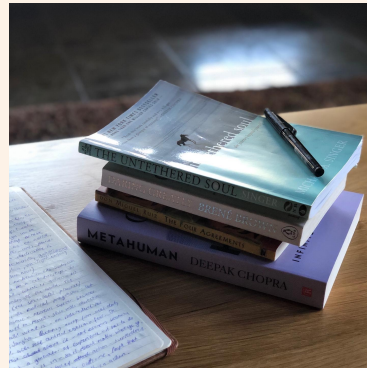
Keep your space tidy and organised. It's only you so this isn't a big ask. We want to experience a harmonious outer environment to reflect the harmonisation of our inner space.

No social media or Netflix or any digital world distractions. We're not interested in anything that will distract us from the inner work we're here to do.



It can be tempting to think that someone else has the answers that will bring us deep, lasting happiness & fulfillment, but it's not the case. Think of great teachers, teachings & technologies of Yoga as signposts that guide us back to the simple fact that we are our own greatest teachers & the answers that we seek are most definitely found within.

Cass x



Keen to learn with us?

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