

HEALING WITH
LIFE
FORCE

TEACHINGS AND TECHNIQUES
OF PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

VOLUME **1** PRANA

SHIVANI LUCKI

HEALING with LIFE FORCE

TEACHINGS AND TECHNIQUES OF
PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA
by SHIVANI LUCKI

for inquiries and publication:
NANDINI@CCRIGHTS.ORG
MANU@CCRIGHTS.ORG

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INTRODUCTION

The book you have in hand is the first volume in the Life Force trilogy – *Prana, Intuition, Magnetism* – three guidebooks for your journey to better health. Together they represent an overarching view of Paramhansa Yogananda's teachings and techniques for self-healing and Self-realization.



Volume One, *Prana*, takes us back to the very beginning, when Life Force becomes the power that fashions creation. Yogananda shows us how to harness that power and use it to infuse our bodies with vitality. That force also gives rise to the eternal struggle between the soul and the ego, the root cause of all disease. Through the pages and practices of this book, you will learn how to reconcile these two protagonists through techniques of meditation; how to regenerate the cells and organs of your body with Yogananda's Energization Exercises; and how to nourish yourself and keep your body free from impurities with his dietary and detox recipes. A fascinating section in this volume presents Yogananda's techniques for utilizing the sun's power for self-healing.

Volume Two, *Intuition*, highlights the superpowers of the conscious, subconscious and superconscious dimensions of the mind. It offers extensive advice for breaking the stranglehold of negative habits, for using affirmations to carve new thought-habits in the brain, and for learning to cooperate with the highest source of healing—Divine Love.

Volume Three, *Magnetism*, reveals how the Law of Attraction operates in our lives: how it draws us into contact with friends from past lives; and how we can use it to attract the economic and human resources for a successful career.

The final chapter of the trilogy demonstrates how we can attune ourselves to the subtle, vibratory healing frequencies of mantra and music, of nature, holy places, and inspiring people. Important techniques are given to reinforce our magnetic aura which protects us from negative influences that threaten our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health and well-being.

We are not alone in this quest. Some of those who have come before us, in ages past and in our own times, those who have reached the summit of what it means to be a fully Self-realized being, have left for us guidelines to follow. One such recent guide is Paramhansa Yogananda.

Paramhansa Yogananda

Author of the enduring spiritual classic, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, Yogananda is universally regarded as an enlightened spiritual master.

Although Yogananda is not remembered primarily as a miracle healer, in his early lecture tours across America he gave many public demonstrations of the power of self-healing. When divinely guided, Yogananda would occasionally perform a healing; but his intention as a spiritual guide was to teach others the methods by which they could draw upon the inexhaustible Life Force to heal themselves.

Interactive

Throughout the three volumes you will find exercises to help you practice what you are learning. Your own experience of the techniques will give you an immediate awareness of their benefits.

Each exercise is aligned with a self-improvement goal, such as identifying our positive and negative, helpful and harmful habits. Doing the exercises at the points indicated will help you bring their benefits into your daily life.

Most of the exercises can be done, at your choosing, as you move through the book. Some of them are writing exercises that you will find in the online Appendices to download and complete electronically, or print and complete on paper.

Stories

Especially engaging, inspiring, and instructive are the stories which I have included throughout the books, from people who have used these techniques for their own healing. Some of the stories are allegorical, some are drawn from mythology; most of them tell real-life experiences.

Now it's time to start your journey of self-healing.
May you make steady progress as you strive to become what
Yogananda describes as "the master of your destiny."

✧ LIVE OR DIE ✧

Based on true stories

Although Samuel had been feeling distinctly unwell, he was reluctant to alarm his family, and so he had said nothing about the pains that were coming with increasing frequency and urgency. "Probably just age," he thought. Now in his sixties, he had considered retiring from a job that had long since ceased to hold any interest for him.

After a general checkup, the doctor referred him to an oncologist, who announced that he had an inoperable terminal cancer, and that he had perhaps six months to live.

Devastated, Samuel told his family that the doctor said he would die within six months. And from that day he began to die, quitting his job to sit before the television and take the medication the oncologist had prescribed for the symptoms. Profoundly depressed, he fended off the efforts of friends to cheer him with invitations to play cards, enjoy a family dinner, or spend time with his grandchildren. Why bother? He was going to die.

The six-month prognosis proved overly optimistic: After three months, Samuel was gone.

The oncologist who had diagnosed Samuel's cancer had another patient, Luca, who was roughly the same age as Samuel and had received an identical diagnosis and prognosis. But when Luca revealed the news to his family, he announced that he intended to live his final months to the full.

Luca loved his work and his colleagues. He reduced his hours and redefined his role as helping the others acquire the skills to carry forward the plans they had made together. In his spare time, he took a drawing class that he'd formerly been unable to find time for. The instructor soon discovered that Luca had talent, and within months he had enough sketches for a small exhibition.

Luca was happier than ever. Together with his wife, he traveled to exotic locales, where they experienced a diversi-

ty of cultures, food, and customs, making interesting new friends along the way

Luca had found little time to share the lives of his two teenage sons, and now that he began to discover what wonderful youngsters they were, and wanting to leave them with happy memories, he made sure that they were able to share small adventures and spend meaningful time together.

After three months, Luca returned to the oncologist, who announced that the tumor had diminished. At six months, it was smaller still, and after a year it had vanished entirely. Follow-up exams at three, five, and ten years showed him completely cancer free.

When we close the doors to life, life leaves us. When we embrace life, it embraces us!



LEGEND OF CITATIONS

*Each citation is referenced in the Endnotes.
These are the symbols used within the text.*



PARAMHANSA
YOGANANDA



HOLY BIBLE
(King James)



SWAMI
KRIYANANDA



SWAMI SRI
YUKTESWAR



BHAGAVAD
GITA

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Human Evolution

When the soul takes a human body, the evolutionary drama changes in fundamental ways. The individual soul no longer passively plays a set of pre-assigned roles; rather, it begins to write its own story, thanks to capacity uniquely granted to human beings: **free will**.

With free will, the individual soul becomes self-determined. Minerals and plants have no ability to choose their activities, which are regulated for them by the laws of their nature. Animals have a modicum of choice which is regulated primarily by the instinct of survival. But human beings are endowed with the ability to choose their actions freely, with the caveat that they must experience the karmic consequences of their acts. Thus, free will is inextricably linked to – and is, in fact, the cause of – the law of karma.

We are endowed with free will and act as we like, thus accumulating good or bad seeds of actions which govern all our future lives. Having free will, we are the architects of our own destiny.^[1]



With the emergence of free will, the human ego begins to take an active role, as it quickly realizes that it has been granted the freedom to delineate its own boundaries as a separate entity.

This consciousness of individual existence cannot but be separative at first, as an entity beholds itself as being distinct from every other individual expression in infinity. As this sense of separateness becomes intensified by feelings of attachment to that individuality, it becomes ego-consciousness.... Awareness at the human level becomes *self-awareness*; it becomes clearly defined as ego.^[2]



When the soul enters the human level, its first task is to explore its uniqueness.

While the animals are driven by their instinctive desires to eat, find shelter, and procreate, without any yearning to be more than or different than they are, the ego drives human beings to explore fulfillments beyond the basic necessities of life. At the human level, the soul's desire to experience ever-greater happiness is freed from the constraints of instinctive behavior to explore a far more intense range of individual expression.

In the previous chapters, we have seen the ego in its role as a villain. Let there be no doubt, the ego is the instrument of cosmic delusion – Maya. But everything in creation has its dual, and the ego has a positive role to play as well. Let us give the ego its due – for the essential role it plays in helping us to learn many necessary lessons, even as we give all due respect to its power to blind and bind us.

It is one of the strange paradoxes of life that, while the ego is the greatest barrier to divine attainments, one needs a well-developed ego to long for those attainments....As man progresses through the long spiral of incarnations, however, seeking happiness and fulfillment in one material channel after another, and repeatedly being disappointed, he begins to become painfully aware of his own personal frustration and inadequacy. Consequently he begins gradually to develop a desire to find deeper, personal, solutions. The desire to seek something deeper demands this sense of *personal* need. The ego, therefore, though in the end our enemy, is for a long time our greatest friend.^[3]

Now that free will and the ego have come into play at the human level, we cannot predict how many incarnations it will take the ego to reunite with Spirit.

Spiritual evolution from this time onward becomes speeded up, or delayed, or temporarily reversed, according to the caliber of the individual's own efforts.^[4]

Ego Transformation

India's great epic, the *Mahabharata*, is set against the backdrop of a pending civil war. Although the story is based on historical events, it is an allegory – a subtle tale of the inner battle that rages within each of us, between the soldiers of the Soul and the armies of the Ego.

The general of the dark forces is the veteran warrior Bhishma, who, according to Paramhansa Yogananda's spiritual interpretation, symbolizes the ego. Bhishma's story explains why the ego is so difficult to conquer. Bhishma had performed a heroic sacrifice, whereupon the gods granted him a very unusual boon: He could not be killed unless he himself decided to die. Thus Bhishma was a formidable foe, and all but invincible.

Indeed, the ego is the last delusion to disappear. It can only be transcended by self-offering into the Infinite. With the final surrender of the last shreds of ego-consciousness comes an oceanic bliss, spreading out to embrace the universe.

The ego will accompany us to the end of the battle. To win the ego over to the soul's side, we must be ready for its thrusts and prepared to counter them.

While we cannot kill the ego, we can *educate* it. Through the four stages of human evolution, the soul continually tries to show the ego, through lessons and experiences appropriate to the ego's understanding at each stage, how to expand its self-identity to include realities beyond itself, and embrace those understandings, attitudes, and actions that will bring it true, lasting happiness and inner freedom – for example, the joy of selfless service and unconditional love.

In the *Mahabharata*, the ego in the form of Bhishma resists the soul's advances mightily, while surrounding himself with a cohort of soldiers whose role is to protect him.

In this chapter, we will look at the strategies the ego adopts to protect and promote itself, and how we can deploy our soul-soldiers to disarm the ego's army. We can think of the ego's ploys as harmful weeds in the garden of our soul. If we can pull the ego-weeds the moment we see them rising in the soil of our consciousness, they will lose their power to threaten the soul's beautiful trees and flowers.

Signs of wellness and symptoms of disease

Disease results when life force is unable to flow freely throughout the body – owing to the tug-of-war between Spirit (the Soul) and Maya (the Ego). Paramhansa Yogananda's guru, Sri Yukteswar, said that all human beings suffer from a single common illness which he called "spiritual amnesia." In short, we have forgotten who and what we are.

Man is a soul, and has a body. When he properly places his sense of identity, he leaves behind all compulsive patterns. So long as he remains confused in his ordinary state of spiritual amnesia, he will know the subtle fetters of environmental law.

The source of soul disease is forgetfulness

The soul knows the boundless bliss and freedom of Spirit. In his *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali refers to spiritual awakening as "*smriti*" – "memory" or "remembrance." Maya's job is to tempt us to forget our true nature as joy. And when we do remember, Maya tries to tempt us to seek joy outwardly.

Soul diseases are produced by ignorance and cosmic delusion by which a man forgets his perfect divine nature and concentrates on his imperfect human nature.... Spiritual ignorance is the real cause of mental and physical disease. If one removes ignorance from the soul by meditation and God-contact, he has automatically removed mental and physical disease from his body.



How could the soul, which is a reflection of pure Spirit, become "diseased"? It will help us to remember that the perfect Soul can only play an active role in our lives as long as we can remain consciously connected with Spirit. When our Soul connection is active, our body, mind, and soul are perfectly harmonized and health. But if we lose the connection, the ego finds it much easier to open gaps for Maya to hypnotize us with ignorance and paralyze our will with false hopes.

How can we know when our Soul connection is at risk? What symptoms does the disease of Soul ignorance present? Yogananda warns us to watch out for the following signs:

- The habit of putting off meditation
- Unwillingness to meditate altogether
- Restlessness; lack of Soul peace
- Discontentment
- Want of poise; unbalance
- Disharmony, unkindness, unforgiveness
- Bigotry
- Melancholia
- Lack of introspection and self-analysis

These symptoms, left unchecked, inevitably lead to inner disharmony and unwellness.



Signs of spiritual health

Now that we can recognize the symptoms of spiritual disease, we can construct a profile of the qualities of people who are spiritually healthy. They –

- Regularly contact the state of inner peace and live in that awareness throughout the day
- Live in harmony with themselves, and create harmonious relationships and environments
- Are kind, generous, patient, tolerant, and serviceful
- Remain calmly centered even in difficult situations, and are able to help others in a crisis

- Welcome challenges and unexpected situations as opportunities for growth and understanding
- Associate with people of truth, integrity, and spiritual advancement
- Are aware of the consequences of their thoughts and actions, and are able to make the needed adjustments

What about karma?

Karma is a spiritual law, just as gravity and motion are physical laws: our actions have consequences, even as Newton's Third Law of Motion tells us that every physical action produces a reaction. The Bible refers to this principle:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”
(GALATIANS 6:7)

Each of our actions and thoughts will have consequences, immediately or in the long run. We set the machinery of karma in motion, for good or ill, by the manner in which we exercise of our free will.

All physical diseases, accidents, and mental or spiritual suffering are due to the law of cause and effect as applied to our actions governing this life and previous lives.

Contrary to popular belief, karma has nothing to do with “sin” or divine punishment or vengeance. Karma is simply the impersonal operation of divine law on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes. Healthy habits have positive results, whether in the form of abundant physical energy and strong immunity, mental clarity and creativity, prosperity and success, or happiness and contentment. Breaking the laws of body and mind brings disease, confusion, and unhappiness.



God never punishes or rewards you, for He has given you the power to punish or reward yourself by the use or misuse of your own reason and will. It is you who transgressed the laws of health, prosperity, and wisdom and punished yourself with sickness, poverty, and ignorance.

“Karma” is simply a name for the impersonal mechanism by which the consequences of our actions are delivered. It is impersonal, because it applies to everyone equally, without exception. It is in a sense mathematical, good karma in the present life mitigating bad karma from the past.

Karma is also benevolent because it brings to our awareness the thoughts and actions which have resulted in wellbeing and happiness or in illness and suffering. By studying the results of our actions, we can avoid making mistakes in future that will have serious consequences, and engage instead in actions that will speed our spiritual evolution while avoiding karmic traps and byways.

We can think of past health karma as being a messenger. Gently at first it brings signs of discomfort – a physical pain, a distasteful argument, a disappointment – warning us to take stock and make adjustments. If these signs are repeatedly unheeded, however, they can become the harbinger of chronic disease.

Whenever a person transgresses physically, mentally, or spiritually, a portal for a specific disease is opened, according to the nature of the transgression, to enter the body.

The boomerang effect of karma, good or bad, can be delivered instantly or slightly delayed, or it may mysteriously appear as a consequence of unremembered actions in distant past lives.

We've all experienced “*instant karma*” – when, for example, we've overeaten or consumed foods that didn't agree with us, whereupon an instant message arrived in the form of a tummy ache.

Let us not forget the positive side of instant karma – the kind gesture or noble action that brings a rapid reward.

You are in a hurry to get to the bank before it closes. On your right, a line of cars is trying to enter the stream of traffic. You courteously slow to allow several cars to enter. Whether they ignore your kind gesture or signal their appreciation with a smile and a wave, several blocks later, when you try to enter a busy thoroughfare, someone lets you in, and when you reach the bank you find a free parking space in front of the door. The karmic law can be snappy, and it can deliver results with interest.

With *Delayed karma*, the consequences of our actions may need time to get sorted and organized before they are delivered – human relationships are an area where we commonly see this. If we criticize a colleague's work behind his back, we should not be surprised if, months later, the authenticity of our work is called into question and we are denied a promotion.

On the positive side, if you help a colleague by sending him useful resources anonymously, you may be surprised to find an unexpected tax refund appearing in the mail months later.

Forgotten karma is where a crisis, or a blessing, occurs with no apparent cause. Disabilities that appear at birth or happen as the result of illness or accidents could be due to transgressions of divine laws in past incarnations. A windfall inheritance from a distant relative could indicate a sacrifice that you made on their behalf in a past life.

Overcoming karma

While we cannot erase our past actions, we do have some leeway to choose how we will experience the resulting karma – whether we will be passive victims of our karma, or if we will receive the message, learn the lesson, and take it as a signal that we need to correct our behavior and develop our inner strength. As Yogananda's guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, tells us:

The message boldly blazoned across the heavens at the moment of birth [our astrological birth chart] is not meant to emphasize fate—the result of past

good and evil—but to arouse man's will to escape from his universal thralldom. What he has done, he can undo. None other than himself was the instigator of the causes of whatever effects are now prevalent in his life. He can overcome any limitation, because he created it by his own actions in the first place, and because he has spiritual resources which are not subject to planetary pressure.



What is the final lesson of karma? This is a deep question for which I hope that all of the chapters in this book will contribute acceptable answers. The positive and negative energies that we have set in motion in countless lives will take a long time to balance in the divine ledger.

It can take a long time to pay all of our karmic debts – but it need not be so. “Knowledge is freedom,” Yogananda said. The master also said that it is important to understand the Law of Karma for several reasons:

- To avoid future mistakes
- To escape or minimize the results arising from errors already performed
- To be able to act rightly, independent of external influences and internal desires
- To understand how we can influence our karma and modify or reduce the intensity of its effects
- To be able to create good karma consciously and independently in harmony with divine wisdom
- To liberate ourselves from the clutches of karma by understanding it – knowledge is freedom



This book will give you spiritual resources to counteract your past karma to a significant degree and set new karmic patterns in motion that will help you eliminate or entirely avoid the karmic consequences of unwise actions in the past. The following story tells how Iris used one of these methods in the face of an untreatable disease.

Meditation Therapy

When the great explorers John Cabot, Christopher Columbus, and Hernán Cortés set sail in the fifteenth century, they launched an Age of Discovery that would initiate a vast expansion in humanity's view of the world, forcing us to look beyond our former image of the earth as flat and with a single land mass, to embrace new continents, new cultures, and new concepts.

Meanwhile, Kepler, Copernicus, and Galileo were raising their gaze above earth's land and seas to explore the planets and the vast universe that tomorrow's discoverers will continue to explore.

Modern exploration in the field of health is notable not so much for its discoveries, as the re-discovery of how people in ancient times were able to lead a balanced life in harmony with themselves, with others, and with the indwelling Spirit. They drew their greatest fulfillment from a direct knowledge of the Self – as Yogananda calls it, from Self-realization.

Meditation is the supreme science of Self-realization mentioned in the ancient Vedas, the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and in numerous Upanishads and Puranas: the scriptures of Sanatan Dharma.

In the following passages, which describe the mental state of advanced meditators, the *Bhagavad Gita* describes the meditative state.

Free from the hopes engendered by desire, and untouched by any craving for possession, the waves of feeling in his heart controlled by yoga concentration, the yogi, retiring alone to a quiet place, should try to unite his little self with the Supreme Self....

The state of complete inner tranquility, which is attained by yoga meditation, wherein the little self (the ego) perceives itself as the Self, enjoys itself as the Self.

[That] state...once attained, is considered the treasure beyond all other treasures: In that state alone does the yogi become immune to grief even in the face of the greatest tragedy. (6:10, 20, 22)

❄ MY MEDITATION ANCHOR ❄

Here where I live in the bustling modern city of Milan, Italy, it is not so easy to remain centered – I am constantly bombarded by distracting sights and sounds and pulled into frenetic rhythms that make me lose myself in an illusory world.

My anchor is meditation. As my breath slows I return to a calm, regular rhythm that carries me to my center, where I feel strong, stable, and protected.

In that state I find myself able to listen to the sounds in my environment with a healthy detachment that enables me to stay open and receptive. Meditation brings me to a deep, forgotten part of myself where intuition accompanies the steps of the day and connects me to meaningful thoughts, words, and encounters.

I simply cannot do without meditation! It transforms my days and the quality of my sleep, granting me the gift of a life that is filled with joy and gratitude. –*Cecilia, Milan*



LIFE FORCE HEALS

Points to remember

- Food is not the only, or the best source of energy.
- There is a cosmic source of energy that we can access and tap into directly.
- The cosmic energy flows from the causal to the astral body in the form of Life Force.
- Life Force enters the physical body through the medulla oblongata, where it is stored.
- It is also stored in the cells as prana.
- We can conserve and direct prana for self-healing, or we can dissipate it through the senses.
- Cosmic Energy flows through the causal body to the astral body as Life Force before it reaches and nourishes the physical body as Prana.

- Good health depends on having an abundant supply of prana in the body, and on its harmonious flow.
- The astral body consists of the astral brain, three main energy channels called the naḍīs (the iḍa, pingala, and sushumna), and the chakras.
- To maintain good health, it is important to balance the flow of life force in the nadis with the aid of pranayama exercises. Practice at least one pranayama exercise for several minutes each day.
- Life Force enters the physical body at the medulla oblongata, the negative pole of the sixth chakra, and is distributed along the cerebrospinal cortex (the brain and the spinal plexuses).
- The doorway to Life Force at the medulla oblongata is generally closed due to ego-centered mental attitudes. Opening this doorway is the key to all effective self-healing methods.
- The mental attitudes that correspond to each chakra either facilitate or block the flow of prana
- The greater your willingness to participate dynamically in your life, the more strongly the healing energy will flow through you.
- Life Force enters the body through the doorway of the medulla oblongata.
- Willpower, located at the spiritual eye, is the key that opens that door.
- Willpower is “desire plus energy, directed toward fulfillment.”
- Willpower is a spiritual muscle; the more we use it, the stronger it becomes.
- Whenever we rise to meet a challenge, we have won a victory, no matter if outwardly we’ve succeeded or failed.
- Watch out for and banish the “willpower vampires” from your life: passivity, negativity, laziness, doubt, and fear
- Use your willpower every day.

Lifestyle

Hippocrates, who is widely regarded the father of Western medicine, said that health can only be assured by proper diet: “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” The word ‘diet’ derives from Greek *daita*, which means “healthful living according to the proper selection of food.”

Centuries before Hippocrates lived, the ancient healing science of Ayurveda was established in India on four pillars, the first being diet: “Health begins in the kitchen.”

In modern terminology, “You are what you eat” is widely accepted by lay people as well as doctors as the basis for the science of nutrition.

Dietary recommendations have a prominent place in Yogananda’s teachings on the science of Self-realization. His earliest writings include detailed dietary instructions, which form the basis for this chapter.

Points to remember

- Choose foods that are rich in vitality and endowed with high vibrations.
- Find a suitable diet and stay with it; do not make food your religion.
- Include sunrays and oxygen in your daily diet.
- Prepare and eat your food more consciously.
- Eat in calm, uplifting environments with inspiring companions.
- Right eating, moderation, and exercise will practically banish disease from the face of the earth.
- Walk, run, or take some form of vigorous exercise with deep attention until you perspire, every morning and evening.
- Perform some sort of exercise every day until a perspiration breaks out over your whole body. Your colds and other similar ills will soon disappear.
- Take brisk fresh-air walks daily.
- Slowly walk two miles a day. Remain outdoors.

- Take an early morning run in the park to keep your heart in good condition, otherwise you will find you get out of breath quickly.
- Now that winter and its healthful outdoor sports are here, take time to go skating, skiing, and walking.
- Do you run every day? If, when you run or go upstairs, you feel a pain in the chest or are quickly out of breath, take care. You have a lazy heart, suffering from lack of proper exercise. Begin to take daily walks and increase your speed until you can run without panting. Then run every day.
- A proper diet, daily vigorous exercise, and judicious fasting are the keys to good health, disease prevention, and longevity.
- The organs of elimination are easily compromised by overeating, and by external and internal toxins.
- Drink a sufficient amount of water and other liquids to support the digestive system and to process waste matter effectively.
- A daily routine of deep breathing exercises helps eliminate toxins.
- To support the body's ability to eliminate toxins, Yogananda recommends fasting one day per week and three consecutive days once a month.
- The Nine-Day Cleansing and Vitalizing Diet should be done at least one or more times a year.
- Life Force Energization Exercises are an efficient way to both recharge and purify the body cells.



✧ **ANTIGRAVITY** ✧

He was an experienced mountaineer. Alone or with climbing friends, he had scaled many of Europe's highest peaks, including a number of first ascents. Yet one climb had eluded him – this time, he would attempt it on his own. He knew the mountain well, having reached the peak on several occasions by other routes, but this would be his first attempt to conquer the impossible north face.

The ascent began with no insurmountable challenges. His equipment was in good order and he was in top condition. Yet, just before the summit, the cliff curved far out over the valley, a thousand meters below. He couldn't go forward, as there were no holds for hands, feet, or pitons (rock anchors). Nor could he return the way he had come. His only option was to climb upside down and out around the jutting rock.

A small ledge supported him as he made his first attempt. At a certain point the force of gravity pulled him back down to the ledge. Again and again he tried, and yet again, always falling painfully from the same point. Bruised and exhausted after more than twenty attempts, he came close to giving up. It seemed he would die there. But what kind of spirit would he die with? Surely that would be up to him. He thought, "If I die, I will do so trying one more time." Summoning all his willpower, he continued.

On one of the "final" attempts, just as he reached the point where he always fell, a force pressed him against the mountain and continued to hold him safely as he progressed around the protruding edge to the top of the jutting boulder. Uncomprehending but grateful, he continued the short distance to the summit.

When he recounted the experience to his climbing companions, they could only conclude that the thin air had caused him to hallucinate. Clearly, there would be no

persuading them, yet he knew that the power of the universe had responded to his determination. From then on, he had a deep appreciation of the proverb: “Where there is a will, there is a way.”

✧ ENABLED ✧

The true and evolving story of Kate Foster

At seven, Kate Foster already showed extraordinary promise in gymnastics. She was strong on the uneven bars, graceful in the floor exercise, poised on the beam, and high-flying off the vault.

When she was twelve, Kate was diagnosed with leukemia. During chemotherapy her leg developed a virulent infection and had to be amputated at mid-thigh. Thanks to a bone marrow transplant and her determined will, she recovered from the cancer.

With the support of a creative coach and her loving father, Kate returned to the gym, and within a year after the surgery she was back in training.

She had to relearn her former skills, but she was undaunted. She had no doubt that she would compete again.

In time, she was competing with her team on the bars and beam – not as in the Paralympics but on equal terms with fully able athletes. The first gymnast to compete with a prosthetic leg, Kate has inspired many others with disabilities to become gymnasts.

Kate graduated from the University of North Carolina in 2021 with double majors in biology and philosophy. While in college she won second place in the women’s gymnastics decathlon, helped coach the varsity team, and spent a semester in Greece where she served at a clinic for refugees.

Kate is spending a gap year as a medical scribe in the emergency room at the UNC hospital, and preparing for the grueling pace of medical school. No one is worried that she won’t make it. Her strength of will and her determination, her perfect inner balance, and her compassion for others will make her a great doctor.

Through her years of rigorous training, Kate developed the will to return to competitive gymnastics despite a serious, normally disabling disease and the loss of a limb, while earning stellar grades and being accepted into medical school. We look forward to following Kate’s career as she helps patients to overcome their afflictions.

✧ HYPOCHONDRIA ✧

You could say that I was a hypochondriac – I fit the description in every way. I was continually fearful of getting sick although the doctors told me that I was perfectly healthy. I would become convinced that I had a certain disease, and when the symptoms weren’t forthcoming I was convinced that I had another one.

These fears made me continuously anxious. I had frequent panic attacks, and it got to the point where I couldn’t function normally. I was utterly paralyzed by my fears, unable to study, or go to work or sleep. My life was not a happy one.

And then I came upon Paramhansa Yogananda’s teachings quite by chance, and I started to meditate, whereupon my situation changed right away.

Whenever I felt relaxed from my meditations, I became aware that the cause of my anxieties was that I was afraid of losing control of my life. When these irrational fears now try to bubble up, I focus at the spiritual eye and open my heart, while affirming that the fear is an illusion, and I ask God to guide me past the fear to the Truth of my existence. After a few minutes, I feel calm, and my mind is no longer spinning around its former anxieties, but attuned to God’s love.

It truly is a miracle! I am free of my former irrational fears, knowing that I am in God’s hands. My motivation and enthusiasm for life have returned, I’m sleeping well, and the time I formerly wasted researching imaginary diseases I can now dedicate to my studies in Ayurveda and volunteer service.

I am grateful for the suffering that brought me to meditation, to my spiritual path, and to the liberating joy of inner freedom. – *Tessy, Netherlands*

✧ I TRADED AN AUDI FOR INNER JOY ✧

In my work as an executive with a Fortune 500 company, I had to fight an endless battle to stay on top in the dog-eat-dog corporate world. I was strong, competitive, and delivered decent results on challenging global projects. I had earned a reputation as a no-nonsense go-getter. Patience and flexibility were not my way of coping with the world.

I had begun to feel exhausted by the highly competitive pace that left hardly any time for relaxation or to enjoy the fruits of my labors. Maybe this was why I was attracted to the book *Material Success Through Yoga Principles*, which changed my life many times over.

As I studied the lessons I was also learning to meditate, and finding new horizons appearing in terms of happiness and prosperity. Generosity was something I had not considered. Now, something shifted inside me, and I began to donate to the needy and disadvantaged. As my meditations and devotion deepened, I encountered some breakthrough ideas on how to relax in these high-tension environments.

I started to tithe by supporting a spiritual organization I had joined, and I became more actively involved in volunteering and serving others. It was then that a number of major changes began to happen in rapid succession.

Soon I received an attractive offer of a job that gave me a great deal more balance, peace of mind, and attractive benefits. I travelled business class for conferences and meetings to idyllic places around the world, and I was given a chauffeur-driven Audi, a golf course membership, a lucrative pension plan, and generous annual bonuses.

Tithing changed the quality and direction of my life. I was becoming a person I would never have imagined before—more sensitive, calm, kind, energetic, and courageous, in new ways. At age fifty, I moved out of the corporate rat race, and today I run a boutique coaching and leadership development company from my home. I am a sought-after consultant for industry associations, where I play strategic advisory roles.

The new work leaves me more time to meditate and volunteer.

At times, I miss the Audi and chauffeur, but then I quickly remind myself of the pressures and stressors I've left behind, and of the joy I have found through sharing my life with God, a joy that increases with every tithe. —*Latha, Pune, India*

✧ FROM PANIC ATTACK ✧ TO HEART ATTACK

On the day before the hearing, my client called to say that he was on the way to the hospital with chest pain and would be unable to appear in court. At the hospital, he was admitted with a heart attack.

I was representing the client at his arraignment on charges of drug possession, in the tribal court of a Native American reservation. Several days before the hearing, he had written to say that he did not want to appear, because he was afraid of going to jail. I did my best to reassure him that we would find a reasonable solution. But his anxiety only increased, and that evening he called and said that he was considering suicide as an alternative to jail. I tried to calm him, then I called social assistance.

Shortly thereafter, he had the heart attack.

In court the next day, I was able to negotiate a sentence without jail time. When he received the news, his condition rapidly improved and he was released from the hospital.

The situation turned out well for my client, and was deeply instructive. I realized how our fears over a perceived unwelcome future can lead to serious physical consequences. I also realized how anxious I habitually became before I had to appear in court, and how the anxiety caused me to be nauseous, and short-tempered with my husband and children. It showed me how I had been sabotaging myself.

This was before I found my spiritual path and began to experience the miracles that meditation and inner stillness could bring into my life. That long-ago courtroom experience brought me a step closer to the path that would offer me tools to meet my life's lessons with grace

and acceptance, and to control my thoughts and emotions so that they might bring only positive results. —*Ryanna, from a Native American Indian Reservation*

❄ THE EARTHQUAKE STOPPED ❄

I only really began to discover Yogananda's affirmations on the day my histology test results came back. It was the news I'd most feared: I had breast cancer. An earthquake erupted in me, and I couldn't think straight.

I was still trembling when I received a message from a spiritual sister. She sent me one of Yogananda's affirmations and encouraged me to repeat it continuously:

*My body cells are made of Light,
They are perfect because You are perfect,
They are healthy because You are health,
They are Spirit because You are Spirit,
They are immortal because You are living.*

I perfectly remember the moment I began to repeat the affirmation. I felt the words resonating in every part of my body – I could feel that every cell was being affected. “Something” had been set in motion that I could not explain, even though I experienced it. The earthquake stopped – I was no longer afraid. Strangely, I felt joy.

No longer debilitated by fear, and with this powerful tool in hand, I met the test with courage and assurance. The cancerous cells were removed, and no chemotherapy was needed, only radiation. Now, more than three years later, I continue to use the affirmation, together with another that helps me ward off anxiety before my quarterly checkups:

*I am immersed in the Eternal Light,
It pervades every particle of my body,
I live in that Light,
the Divine Spirit envelops me entirely inside and out.
God is in me, He surrounds me and protects me!
I will eliminate every fear that precludes me
from His Light.*

—*Stefania, Milan, Italy*

❄ THE SHINY PAIL ❄

Big Frog and Little Frog were mismatched in size but were nonetheless good friends. Among all the creatures that lived around the pond, these two were the most adventurous.

One morning, they set off down the road to the local barnyard, hopping merrily in anticipation of an adventure. No sooner they got there than they spied a glint coming from the direction of the cowshed. When they challenged each other to reach the shining object first, Big Frog with his longer legs and wide-webbed feet was the victor.

When Little Frog arrived, he found Big Frog staring up at a shiny pail – what an interesting sight! – they had never seen such a marvel. In unison, they leapt onto the rim to peer inside, where they saw what appeared to be a deep pond of white water gleaming below. Never having seen white water, they eagerly jumped in.

Although the white pond wasn't big, it was refreshingly cool and had a pleasant smell. Having explored it from side to side and top to bottom, they decided to move on and see what other adventures the barnyard could offer.

Alas! The rim of the pail was too high and their feet found no solid base to jump from. All they could do was keep swimming in the hope that someone would save them.

As time passed and no one came, their swimming became boring, then laborious. Finally, Big Frog exclaimed that he couldn't go on. But Little Frog gathered all his willpower and exclaimed that they must! And so they kept swimming for a while, until Big Frog, legs burning with fatigue, stopped paddling and sank.

Refusing to succumb to what seemed a dire fate, the plucky Little Frog kept paddling. Then, after no more than a few minutes, he felt something soft but solid under his feet, and with his last strength he leapt onto the pail's rim. Looking down, he saw a small yellow mound floating in the white water where he had jumped.

(The farmer's wife was just as surprised when she came to churn the milk to butter!)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SHIVANI LUCKI is a foremost proponent and practitioner of Paramhansa Yogananda's teaching and techniques for self-healing. For fifty years she has led seminars and workshops throughout India, Europe and the U.S., helping people discover their inner healing powers.

After receiving a bachelor's degree, and doing postgraduate studies in jurisprudence, Shivani discovered Yogananda's teachings through his direct disciple, Swami Kriyananda. In 1969 she joined Kriyananda to become one of the founding members of Ananda World Brotherhood Village in California, the first community based on Yogananda's ideals of "simple living and high thinking."

In 1985, Kriyananda invited Shivani and her husband to help develop the Ananda movement in Europe, and in 2007 she cofounded the Yogananda Academy of Europe. Within the Academy, she founded an Ananda Raja Yoga School and a Life Therapy School for Self-Healing.

The curriculum she developed for the healing school is reflected in the three volumes of the Life Force trilogy. The methods and techniques contained in these books have been practiced with remarkable results by thousands of Academy students, and by participants in her popular courses.

The Life Force trilogy is being published in India by Ananda Sangha Publications in January, 2024; in Italy by Yogananda Edizioni in 2024, and in the United States by Crystal Clarity Publishers in 2025.



"Shivani is an extraordinary teacher—engaging and crystal clear. Her classes have always been a transformative experience for me."

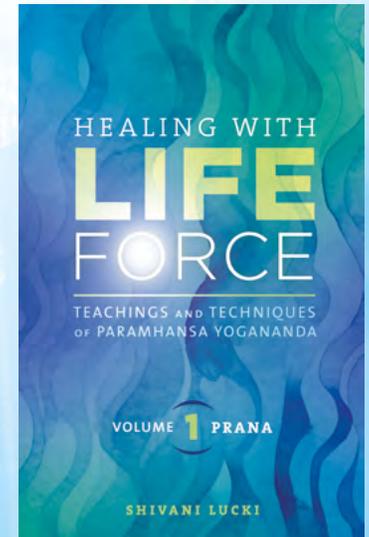
—**Anna, Italy**

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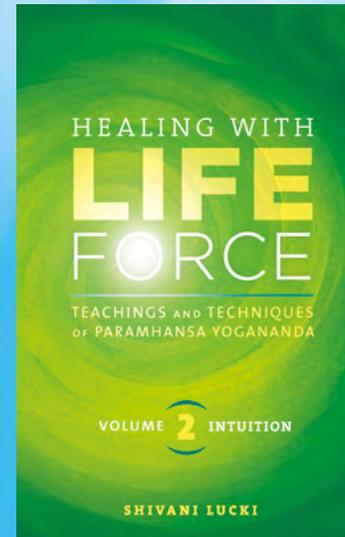
VOLUME ONE | PRANA

takes us back to the very beginning, when Life Force becomes the power that fashions creation. Yogananda shows us how to harness that power and use it to infuse our bodies with vitality.



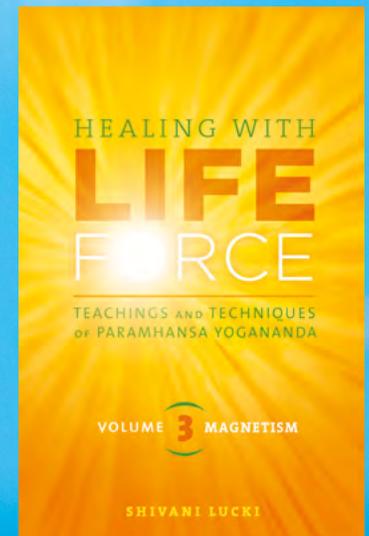
VOLUME TWO | INTUITION

highlights the healing superpowers of the conscious, subconscious and superconscious dimensions of the mind.



VOLUME THREE | MAGNETISM

reveals how the Law of Attraction operates in our lives: how it draws us into contact with friends from past lives; how we can use it to attract the economic and human resources for a successful career; and how to reinforce our magnetic aura which protects us from negative influences that threaten our well-being.



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