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7 REASONS TO GO ON RETREAT

BY MARY BEMIS



he almost universal teaching of spiritual retreats, and even many luxurious destination resorts, is to come into the present moment—to come into the now. One of the goals of the retreat is to bring that present home. And that's all good. We all get it.

But between the here and now is the big question: Do we actually go now? Does our current present involve a retreat, or is coming into the now something that we plan to do someday? Is now the time? No one can answer that question for you. But here is some fodder for your consideration.

You're a caregiver, and you truly believe you can't go anywhere. Breathe into that thought, and consider that it may be killing you and ultimately doing no good for the person you care for. We all need balance-and you need a break. Spread the word for help that will allow you time and space to nourish yourself so that you can continue to do the good you are doing. It's time for you to put your wellness first.

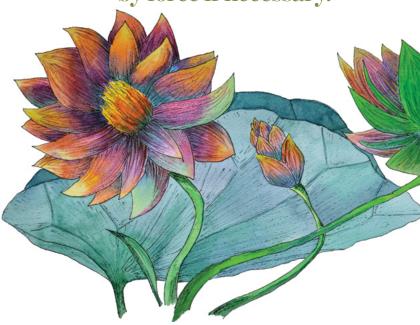
You're feeling so stiff and lethargic that you dread your weekly yoga class. If touching your toes requires crouching down and lifting one of them toward your fingers, it's time to stretch your body and mind.

Think on the bright side: You'll have no problem cramming yourself into a tiny airplane seat. At the end of a good yoga retreat, you'll be limber enough to make the return trip unharmed.

Are the photographs of your last retreat or vacation on an earlier cell phone? If you had to update your photos to have them on your current device, chances are you need a personal upgrade-now.

You are fully convinced that whatever pole you inhabit on the political sphere is the place of the righteous. You need to go ... now. A truly great retreat will open you to nonjudgmental thinking, by force if necessary. Think of a deep-tissue massage as breaking the boundaries for more fluid and open thinking. You'll also be more fun at dinner parties.

A truly great retreat will open you to nonjudgmental thinking, by force if necessary.

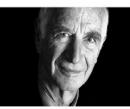




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April 7, 21, 28, 2022 (Thursdays)

Thomas Moore on the Work and Legacy of James Hillman James Hillman was my dear friend, from whom I learned much at our dinners,

on walks and drives, and during collaborations in writing and speaking. He was devoted to the ideas of C.G. Jung and yet was fiercely willing to go his own way. He was always on the lookout for soul, always the therapist, even when he turned his attention away from individuals to the world.

April 19 & 26, May 3 & 10, 2022 (Tuesdays)

Transforming Our Images of God: C.G. Jung on the Self C.G. Jung believed that the Self is an expression of the divine within the

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You've forgotten the world is actually a place of hope and beauty. No matter how lovely or forlorn your own living situation, sometimes you need to be reawakened to beauty through someone else's eyes. That's often what retreats do best—a group of slightly lost souls come together and realize, once again, that life is in fact wonderful—and that we are all agents of change for a better world.

Your diet is stuck in a rut, and you can't imagine cooking and/or eating the same old, same old. The goal of a great retreat should not be direct weight loss—even if you believe that's what you truly need. Contemporary retreat cuisine is often as delicious as it is healthy. And better than any restaurant, the retreat is likely to help you take that cooking home. There are typically cooking classes, nutrition classes, and even gardens on-site. What a retreat can do is shift your relationship toward food and teach you new skills.

You've never been on one. There are myriad choices to choose from, and with infinite teachers, practices, and promises. Just choosing one may be a step outside your comfort zone—but take a bigger step and choose a curriculum that suggests a challenge for you. Let your best self make the call. S&H

+ 7 Reasons Not to Go

- **1.** You've already achieved enlightenment and want to share.
- **2.** You enjoy wallowing in your misery and want to share.
- **3.** You plan to buy the retreat center for corporate wellness and shut down the hot springs.
- **4.** You believe that expressing and preserving your personal rights is more important than protecting the safety of those around you.
- **5.** Your previous retreat relationships are already legendary among the staff.
- 6. Your retreat is an escape to avoid therapy.
- 7. You really don't want to change.







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A HEALING RETREAT MENU

FLAVORFUL AND NOURISHING RECIPES FROM LEADING RETREATS

BY MARY BEMIS

retreat can recharge your relationship with food—especially when you take home a few recipes or cooking tips. Here are some sensational recipes that give you a retreat-worthy meal at home.

Breakfast

"Everything we make at The Retreat Costa Rica is a healthy alternative to favorite menu items," shares founder Diana Stobo, celebrity chef and author of a number of books, including Get Naked Fast: A Guide to Stripping Away the Foods That Weigh You Down. "From a food-science perspective, each ingredient can be substituted with an anti-inflammatory ingredient without compromising the integrity of the food."



COURTESY THE RETREAT COSTA RICA

Passion Fruit Muffins

Makes 4 muffins

FOR THE MUFFINS

2 eggs, separated

1 whole passion fruit (pulp and seed)

½ cup almond flour

½ cup buckwheat flour

1 cup almond milk

1/4 cup maple syrup

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 cup coconut oil

1 teaspoon lemon juice

FOR THE PASSION FRUIT DRESSING

1 whole passion fruit (pulp and seed)

1/3 cup agave syrup

1/2 cup of water

Pinch of salt

MUFFINS

- 1. Separate the yolk from the egg whites and beat the egg whites until foamy. Then add the yolks and mix.
- 2. In a separate bowl, mix together the remaining ingredients.
- 3. Add whipped eggs to batter and gently fold in.
- 4. Pour batter into muffin tins and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

PASSION FRUIT DRESSING

- 1. Cut the passion fruit in half and extract the pulp.
- 2. Place the passion fruit pulp, syrup, water, and salt in a small pot and cook over low-medium heat for 20 minutes until slightly thickened.
- 3. To assemble, place one teaspoon of the passion fruit dressing on the muffin and enjoy!



COURTESY THE RETREAT COSTA RICA

Gluten-Free Waffles

Makes 3 waffles

INGREDIENTS

1 cup cashews

½ cup almond milk

½ cup almond flour

1/4 cup coconut flour

1 egg

2 tablespoon coconut oil

1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 tablespoon maple syrup

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Place the cashews and almond milk in a blender and blend on high speed until creamy.
- 2. In a separate bowl, combine the remaining ingredients and mix together.
- 3. Add the cashew-almond milk mixture to the other bowl and mix until everything
- 4. Place ¼ cup batter in waffle maker and cook according to manufacturer's time.
- 5. Place the cooked waffle on a plate and top with fresh fruit, seeds, honey, or maple syrup.

Lunch

When creating her phenomenal cuisine at Canyon Ranch Woodside Retreat, Executive Chef Isabelle Jackson Nunes says she tries to tap into all of her senses. "Aroma, texture, flavor, and sight," she explains. "I think it's important to challenge ourselves and grow our palates, but I also believe food should be approachable and pleasurable. If we aren't nourishing all of our senses, I'm not sure what the point is!" Jackson Nunes believes that we should tap into the signals our body is sharing with us to guide us as we eat intuitively.

California Buttercup Squash Soup with Pepitas & Pickled Shallot

FOR THE SQUASH SOUP

- 4 cups buttercup squash, cut into chunks
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 3 chipotle chilis in adobo
- 1 tablespoon cumin, toasted and ground

2 bay leaves 1/4 cup olive oil Salt to taste

FOR THE PUMPKIN CRUNCH

1 cup cranberries

1 cup pepitas

½ teaspoon cinnamon, grated

½ teaspoon nutmeg, grated



FOR THE PICKLED SHALLOTS

2 shallots

1 cup red wine vinegar

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup salt

SQUASH SOUP

- 1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 2. Begin by peeling the buttercup squash until the thick skins are removed. Remove the seeds and stringy flesh. Dice the squash into medium-sized chunks.
- 3. In a large mixing bowl, toss the squash with olive oil and salt.
- **4.** Place on a lined baking tray and roast until slightly browned and tender.
- **5.** Clean and dice the yellow onion, medium dice.

- 6. Mince garlic.
- 7. In a six-quart pot, sauté together the bay leaf and yellow onion, adding the garlic last.
- **8.** Add ground cumin, chipotle in adobo, and sauté for two minutes, bringing out all the flavor in the spices.
- 9. Add roasted squash and add vegetable stock.
- **10.** Bring the pot to a boil, and once boiling reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes.
- 11. Season the soup with salt to taste.
- 12. Remove the bay leaf and blend until smooth.

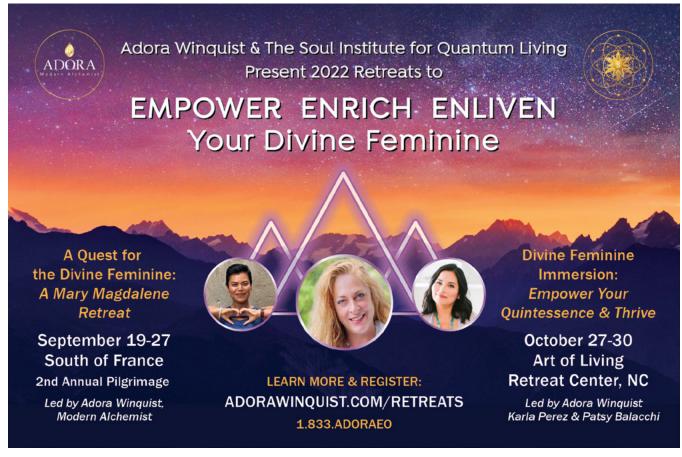
GARNISHES

1. In a medium metal mixing bowl, combine cinnamon, cranberries, nutmeg, and pepitas with a tablespoon of olive oil and

- a pinch of salt. Mix until well incorporated and pour onto a lined sheet pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes and cool to room temperature.
- 2. Slice the shallots into thin rings about an eighth of an inch thick. In a small sauté pan, combine red wine vinegar, salt, and sugar. Bring the mixture to a boil and remove from the heat.
- 3. A spoonful of crema (or substitute sour cream) on the top of this soup is a great way to add an extra layer of flavor and acidity to the finished dish.

TO SERVE

Place hot soup in a bowl and top with pickled shallot, toasted pumpkin and cranberry crunch, and finish with a dollop of crema.



Dinner

Here's a hearty and healthy recipe from Rancho La Puerta, where fresh lacto-ovo cuisine provides protein, vitamins, minerals, and probiotics. The food at this iconic property is low in fat, sodium, and refined flour and sugar—while high in energy, fiber, and complex carbohydrates.

Cauliflower Tacos Al Pastor

Makes 10-12 tacos

FOR THE TACOS

3 guajillo chiles, seeded

2 pasilla chiles, seeded

1/4 cup onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled

1 tablespoon achiote (annatto) paste

1/4 cup pineapple, diced

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

1 teaspoon cumin powder

1/4 cup water

Salt and pepper to taste

11/2 cups chickpeas, cooked and drained

1 head of cauliflower, cut into florets

12-15 corn tortillas

4 limes, cut into wedges

1 avocado, pureed

FOR THE PINEAPPLE SALSA

6 pineapple slices

2 roma tomatoes, diced

½ red onion, diced

1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced

1/4 cup cilantro, chopped

1/4 cup mint, chopped

Juice of 2 limes

Salt and pepper to taste



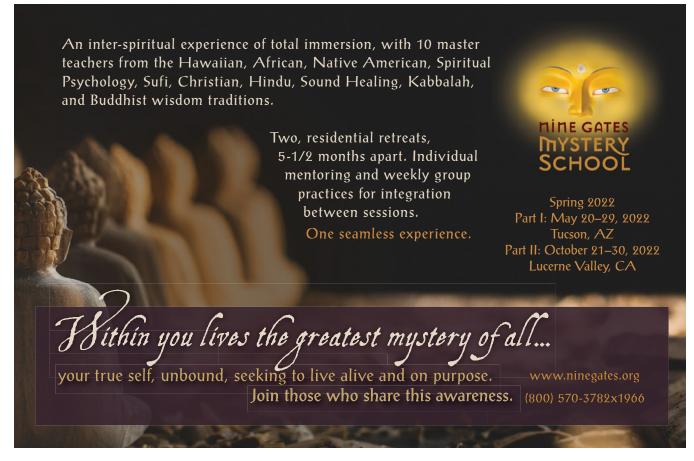
TACOS

- 1. In a blender, make the adobo (Spanish for marinade) by first adding the chiles, onion, garlic, achiote, pineapple, vinegar, cumin, water, salt, and pepper.
- 2. Blend into a smooth paste; add more water if needed. Adjust the flavor, if needed, and reserve.
- 3. Place the cooked chickpeas in a bowl and pour just enough of the adobo to coat them.
- 4. Place the cauliflower in a separate bowl and marinate it with the remaining adobo for at least 30 minutes, or preferably overnight.
- 5. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

- 6. Place the marinated cauliflower and chickpeas in the oven to roast for 15 minutes or until golden brown.
- 7. In the meantime, prepare the salsa and the limes. Once the cauliflower and chickpeas are cooked, place them in a bowl or container with a lid to keep warm.
- 8. Place at the center of the table with warm tortillas and prepare the tacos with a spoonful of the chickpea and cauliflower al pastor, a roasted pineapple salsa dollop, pureed avocado, and a squeeze of lime.

ROASTED PINEAPPLE SALSA

- 1. Place the pineapple slices on a grill or char directly over a flame. You can also roast them in the oven, but they won't have a smoky flavor. Let them cool, and coarsely chop.
- 2. In a bowl, combine the diced tomatoes, pineapple, red onion, jalapeño, cilantro, and mint—season with lime juice and salt and pepper to taste.
- 3. Reserve refrigerated until ready to serve. **S&H**



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HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR RETREAT

BY MARY BEMIS

was fortunate enough to sail to perhaps the original, and certainly the most famous, ancient healing retreat—the Temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus, on the Argolid Peninsula in Greece. The famed non-venomous sacred snakes of the temple that were believed to provide some of the healing power remain on the staff of the symbol of our modern medicine—and remind us that the source of healing remains somewhat magical.

And the practice of getting there reminds us that the journey to our retreat can be just as important as what happens when we arrive. For example, at Epidaurus, the retreatgoers had to walk from the beach to the sanctuary and undergo a purification ceremony before entering.

In modern times, one good example of preparation comes from my neighbors, a husband-and-wife team who for many years embarked on various routes of the Camino de Santiago. Each year began with physical training and extensive planning of the new route in Spain, and the journey began with a 15-mile walk from their house to the airport.

The point is not to become miserable or overwhelmed by too many choices. And so, one solution is to become quiet and just let images play through your head.

BEFORE YOU GO

Know where you're going. Most of us don't get beyond thinking about the weather at our destination—and what to pack. But begin your journey by reading up on where you're going to be. A little knowledge of the geology, topography, plant life, and cultural history will launch you into your retreat well before you arrive.

As you're exploring the place in your mind (and perhaps online), explore your own reasons for going and begin to write down a mission statement that describes why you're going to this place and what you hope to get from it.

CHOOSING A PLACE

One simple fact about having way too many choices is that it becomes harder to feel satisfied that you've made the right choice. Why here and not there? Why that kind of simplicity-or that kind of extravagance? Why that teacher, and why

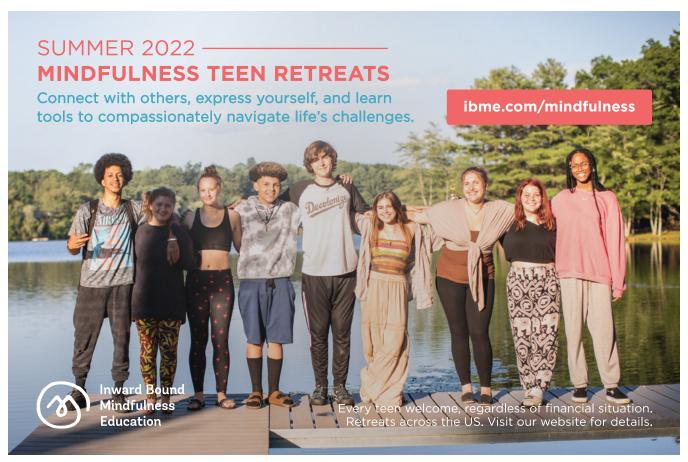
any teacher at all? These are very big decisions for spending your very limited time and resources.

The point is not to become miserable or overwhelmed by too many choices. And so, one solution is to become guiet and just let images play through your head—are there other people there? Are you making your own food? Are you following a curriculum? Are you on a defined path? Are you sitting still?

At some point, hopefully, you'll reach an image that allows your body and mind to sink in and let go. The goal is picturing yourself, wherever it may be, with a quiet smile of satisfaction.

FINANCING YOUR JOURNEY

The most relaxing retreat is one where you're not worried about money. Ideally, one that is essentially paid for in advance, rather than the cost hanging over you. If finances



Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.

ANNE LAMOTT

Spirituality

If you feel 'burnout' setting in, if you feel demoralized and exhausted, it is best, for the sake of everyone, to withdraw and restore yourself.

DALAI LAMA

Spirituality

are a serious limit to your ideal retreat, the goal is to use your financial planning as part of your journey. What might you give up right now as a step toward freeing yourself for the coming journey? Your excess TV subscriptions, for example, and any other charges that seem to grow on credit card statements? Your telephone plan or daily matcha latte? You may find that cutting off those infinite distractions will buy you a plane ticket.

As you do this, keep in mind a simple irony: Some of the most expensive retreats are essentially charging for no WiFi access, no phone, no TV-and no sugar!

EMERGENCY CONTACT

This is important, and not for the reasons you may think. Do you really need to bring your laptop? Do you need a cellphone? If you do, can you leave it with the front desk? Consider the ways that you can actually disconnect during your retreat. Then ask yourself what lifeline you need to make sure that your mind can be at ease while you're away. What is the message on your email and cellphone that protects your retreat? Who is the person you can rely on to make sure that you can be reached in an absolute emergency? That brings us to the most important piece of emergency gear-your journal. Make sure to pack one.

PACKING CONSIDERATIONS

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The simplest packing for a retreat is a monk's robe and a toothbrush—and that's it. Beyond that extreme simplicity, the goal of packing is to be reasonably comfortable and to remove extraneous choices that will cause stress. If you drive, the problem is you can bring anything—and bury yourself in stuff and choices. So, no matter how you're getting there or what class you're traveling, imagine you're limited to just a carry-on.

What goes into your carry-on is dependent on where you're going. Think layers and comfortable shoes. Make sure to call ahead to see which of your essentials are already provided. Wherever you go, bring a small gift. By the end of your retreat, you'll know who to give it to.

GETTING THERE

How can you transform your travels into the Asclepian walk from the sea? What else can you shed before you leave? The old travel saying is "bring half the clothes and twice the money"-but can you cut all of that in half?

Could you walk to the airport, take public transport, or enlist a friend—something that gets you out of your typical drive to the airport? Could you carpool, if driving? Or ride a bike? Let your mind explore all of the options. Why? Because we all know that from vaccination cards, COVID tests, airport screening lines, screaming passengers, flight cancellations, and random acts of unkindness—travel today is often no fun at all. Accept all that, and your travel will actually feel better.

ARRIVAL

As you approach your own destination, you want to prepare your mind and body for what lies ahead. Whatever your experience getting there, you're stepping into a new place.

Unpack completely. Make yourself at home. Remind yourself why you came. Then let go of that expectation and figure out where you are right now and what you want to do. It's your retreat. The present moment of your retreat is the time to do whatever you choose. **S&H**



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TAKING IT HOME

HANG ON TO THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF YOUR RETREAT

BY MARY BEMIS

completely unscientific analysis of the arc of a successful retreat might go something like this: The anticipation and excitement of arrival and change; a growing dis-ease and desire to go home; an inexplicable certainty that you never want to go home; and a final acceptance that it is time to go home.

The big question is, what do you bring back? The key is not to expect too much ... or too little. This brings us to a critical practice of the retreat that most people ignore. It's the reverse of the anticipation of the retreat itself. It is the time when you reflect on all the good experiences you've had and all you've learned on your retreat, and then you visualize yourself back home.

REENTRY EXPECTATIONS

Explore your home and your living situation in the light of your retreat. Look at your life. Look at your friends. Look at your relationships. And then look at yourself-and your future ideal self. Write down what you see and feel-write down what you really want to hang on to—and how you might hang on to it.

As you do this, keep an obscure bit of marketing research in the back of your mind: Once upon a time, a pillow manufacturer discovered that from the time a person wakes up to the realization that their pillow is truly uncomfortable to the time they actually purchase a new pillow is two years. The simple fact is that we hold on to things that are obviously painful for way too long.

So, first of all, go easy on your reentry expectations. The odds of success are against you—but knowing that makes it much easier to make the kinds of changes that you know you need to make. Here's another question: Has your retreat empowered you to begin to make baby steps in your right direction? Or have you geared up for a giant leap?

There isn't a right or wrong answer, but a good retreat should raise the question and give you tools to help you on that path.

A TAKE-HOME TOOLBOX

Decide on your homecoming ritual. How will you step through your own door differently? What will you change physically, in your home, to remind you? Bring your kitchen to mind. What stands out for annihilation?

Go through your home, room to room, and write down the things that no longer serve you and that you can give away (or sell to help fund your next retreat). If the simplicity of your retreat accommodations speaks to you, imagine ways to duplicate that at home.



Now imagine an opposite extreme—maybe your home is missing some comfort that you really want to focus on. Perhaps you've discovered an experience (massage, acupuncture, a trainer) that you need to build into your budget.

Think about how you want to structure your time. At home, your cellphone can be a remarkable tool, both to remind you to be present and to shift your attention to what you value most. Hopefully, your retreat revealed things you want your life to revolve around—and the timer on your phone can help make that a reality, not to mention numerous apps that will accompany you through any practice you can imagine.

Good habits are created by repetition. It doesn't help to think about a good habit—you actually have to do it and resolve to stick to doing it long enough that it becomes part of your nature. Easier said than done, of course, but that's also why any retreat should be seen as a stepping stone toward the next one.

Committing to a new habit will probably necessitate disengaging from an old one. Take time to consider how your habits, good or bad, are connected. Then figure out which small steps will ultimately lead to what may be big changes that you need to make.

Print out photographs from your retreat and post them in strategic places around your home to keep you on track. Keep in mind that many teachers at retreats now offer teleconferencing classes and support.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO HOME?

Some retreats open yearnings that can't be fulfilled in a single retreat. For example, people meditate for 10 days and realize that was only the beginning. For people who have that experience, there is a worldwide network of retreat centers that take volunteers

who pay a minimal amount and do such things as work in the kitchen. The volunteer vacation can last weeks to months to even years.

LIVING YOUR RETREAT

One of the blessings of a retreat is that you might get to meet a life-changing instructor like Jon Kabat-Zinn—a person whose books, videos, and practices can resonate for a lifetime. When I once asked Kabat-Zinn how to bring the wisdom of a retreat home, this was his response:

"I would offer the same advice for getting to Carnegie Hall—practice, practice, practice. And what is true practice in this regard? That is its own koan. So, I will leave it at that. You brought some wisdom to the retreat, just by virtue of choosing to attend and practice. Wisdom is portable, and it is not 'yours.' Each and every one of us needs to listen deeply for our own unique calling and appreciate our profound ability as humans to work with others for the greater good of the world, while attending to whatever is most salient and relevant inwardly and outwardly until there is no fundamental separation between inner and outer.

"It helps if you don't make too much of the personal pronouns, especially 'I,' 'me,' and 'mine,' and become overly invested in your own narratives, especially the most self-centered of them. The 'we' narrative always (dare I say it?) trumps the 'me' narrative. And an open mind of 'not knowing' and knowing that we don't know is an essential complement to the necessity of knowing the actuality of things where suffering is concerned. So, every day and every moment is an opportunity to wake up and embody your understanding of a universal dharma wisdom in whatever forms it most deeply speaks to you."

Mary Bemis is the founder of Insider's Guide to Spas.



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JAYA came when I was about to give up on meditation in general. If you are thinking to meditate, look no further. — Josh Woolfolk, Hemet, California

SUKAISHI DAVID: I have long felt that commonly taught techniques do not take students into true meditation. I am happy to have found your OJAYA course.

— Virginia Graham, Toronto, Canada

Sott Purps Monteray Park

Britt Burns, Monterey Park,
 California ★★★★★

'M 65, and OJAYA is the best thing I have done for myself in my whole life. So relaxing, so deeply restful. My music now comes from such a profound inner depth. I've never felt so alive, ever.

— Richard Bosworth, Bellevue, Washington

ANY TIMES throughout the course tears came to my eyes. WOW! — Rick Blanda, US Air Force TSgt, retired, Warner Robins, Georgia

YOU ARE DEEP — like an ocean —

Most all meditation methods keep you actively engaged on the surface levels of your mind — with various chores, words, observations, and mental gymnastics ...

The ancient **OJAYA** "Armor" technique allows you to leave all efforts behind and settle softly *inwards* to a state of profoundly deep rest ... as you become empowered with an "armor" of clear, calm energy and core inner strength.

Deep, calm energy

HAVE EXPERIENCED more peace and personal freedom in the last couple of months than I ever have in my whole life. I'm starting to shine from the inside out and others are noticing as well. — April Rolfe, Wareham, Mass.

M EDITATION used to be a chore. Now it's truly deeply relaxing and healing. I've tried many other practices, but nothing

compares. The technique pulls you deeper than I had ever imagined. I've never experienced results like this in such a short time.

Nick Bobay, Fort Wayne,
Indiana ★★★★★

THANK YOU Sukaishi ...
... for this wonderful
experience ... and for the
mastery which you teach
these ancient secrets. I'm
one of the many who found
what they were looking for.
You are truly one who
works for the happiness of
others. — Raia Vicolov,
Tulcea, Romania

JAYA holds the secret people have sought in other courses but haven't found. It's simple, effortless and powerful. All the myths that prevented me from enjoying meditation are now debunked.

Hermes Banguid, NorthLiberty, Iowa ★★★★

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