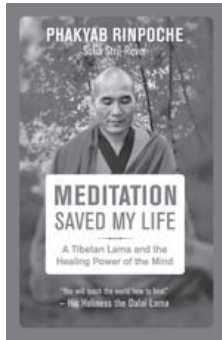


Reviews

Books

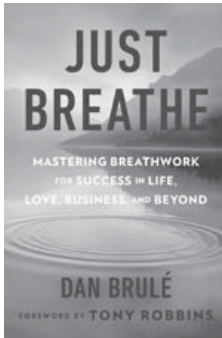


MEDITATION SAVED MY LIFE: A Tibetan Lama and the Healing Power of the Mind by Phakya Rinpoche and Sofia Stril-Rever; Paperback, 8.5x5.5, 257 pp, \$16.95; New World Library 2017, newworldlibrary.com.

EACH PART OF Phakya Rinpoche’s inspiring story could be a book in itself. We experience his boyhood in the high mountain plateaus of Tibet. We see him decide to become a monk at age thirteen, a dangerous

choice in Chinese-occupied Tibet. We learn of Tibetan Buddhist teachings over his twenty-year training. He was recognized as a reincarnated lama by the Dalai Lama, who asked him to return to his traditional post as the Abbot of Ashi Monastery. There he was arrested, imprisoned, and tortured daily by Chinese guards. His great compassion kept his heart free of hatred when he eventually escaped and made his way to Dharamsala, India.

At the Dalai Lama’s bidding he accepted a position to teach the Dharma in the U.S., but got no further than New York City where his injuries brought him to Bellevue Hospital, and the Survivors of Torture Program. He suffered from gangrene of the right foot, tuberculosis of the spine, and pleurisy. When given an ultimatum to have amputation, he wrote to His Holiness who replied: “Why do you seek healing outside of yourself? You have within you the wisdom that heals.” Phakya Rinpoche undertook an intensive retreat in a small Brooklyn apartment for three years, meditating twelve hours a day. He healed remarkably and completely. Thereafter he dedicated himself to “heal in the name of all beings.” His story is memorably told by Sofia Stril-Rever and flawlessly translated from the original French. Highly recommended!



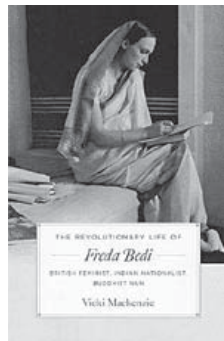
JUST BREATHE: Mastering Breathwork for Success in Life, Love, Business, and Beyond by Dan Brulé; Hardback, 5.5x8.5, 207 pp, \$24.00; Atria/Enliven Books an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc. 2017, simonandschuster.com.

DAN BRULÉ HAS BEEN fascinated with the breath since childhood, which grew with decades of medically related work. The breathwork he teaches for

personal development emphasizes three skills: awareness, relaxation and conscious breathing. He encourages readers

to train with a good teacher for some techniques, but includes much to inspire our practice. He offers research on breathing from diverse groups of scientists and interviews with breathwork trainers, scientists, athletes, warriors and martial artists. They themselves are examples of the benefits: physical, mental or spiritual. He shares a personal story of Navy medical deep-sea diving school. During a grueling running session he nearly dropped out until a buddy ran beside him saying, “Let’s breathe together.” This saved him, giving him enough energy to finish. Out of thirty-seven, only six completed the course. He was one.

In the chapter, “Breathing to Transform Your Body,” he offers a section on the benefits of yawning. He calls it a natural breathing technique that energizes, relaxes and lowers stress and tension. He honors the prophets in “Breathing to Transform Your Spirit,” calling the Buddha and Patanjali his “spiritual buddies.” He describes seeing who we really are, when our consciousness is still. He writes: “What supports our inner journey is to be in our heart when we do breathwork.” *Just Breathe* gives us a deeper appreciation for a life-giving power always with us.

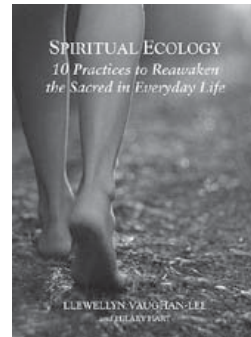


THE REVOLUTIONARY LIFE OF FREDA BEDI: British Feminist, Indian Nationalist, Buddhist Nun by Vicki Mackenzie; Paperback, 5.5x8.5, 208 pp, \$16.95, eBook \$12.99; Shambhala Publications 2017, Shambhala.com.

BORN INTO A humble family in 1911 in Derby, England, Freda was given a scholarship to St Hugh’s College, Oxford, and there met her future husband, Baba Phyre Lal Bedi (BPL), the sixteenth direct descendent of Guru Nanak. From childhood Freda had been spiritually inclined and later wrote, “I discovered all these saints of the past had sought Reality, the Truth, and were not satisfied until they had reached some direct intuition of the Light, the life of the cosmos... If they can do it, why can’t I sit quietly and contemplate.” After marriage, she and BPL moved to India where they were closely associated with renowned freedom fighters. In 1941 she was chosen by Mahatma Gandhi to be the fifty-seventh satyagrahi—the first British woman to be admitted to this elite group.

Freda was a mother, an orator, and a tireless worker for India’s independence. She meditated daily and had revelations and visions. In 1953 Nehru sent her to Burma as India’s representative of UNESCO. There she undertook vipassana meditation under Mahasi Sayadaw and Sayadaw U Titthila, and had her first enlightenment experience while walking the streets of Kyaukme in northern Burma. When the Dalai Lama was invited to take refuge in India and the Tibetan diaspora began, Nehru appointed Freda advisor on Tibetan refugees in the Ministry of External

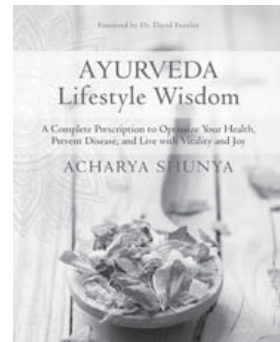
Affairs. She spent years helping Tibetan refugee tulkus, monks and nuns, and advocated that nunneries be self-administered, a radical idea in the 1960’s. In 1966 she was ordained a nun by the 16th Karmapa, the first western woman to take ordination in Tibetan Buddhism. With photos and abundant insights by her children, including film star Kabir Bedi, this is a spiritual biography you will not want to miss!



SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY: 10 Practices to Reawaken the Sacred in Everyday Life by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee and Hilary Hart; Paperback, 5.25x7.25, 100 pp, \$12.95, eBook \$8.71; Golden Sufi Center 2017, GoldenSufi.org.

AS LLEWELLYN WRITES in the introduction, “The sacred is not a place to go, but a *state of being*.” Written as a companion to *Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth* [reviewed

in *Light of Consciousness*, Winter 2013], this guide invites us to transform our relationship with the Earth through simple practices: walking, breathing, gardening, planting seeds in the soil, cooking, cleaning, reducing clutter through simplicity, communicating with the Divine through prayer, opening to the mystery of death. Each chapter begins with an inspirational quote followed by personal insights and wisdom from various traditions, then suggestions to guide your “practice.” This wise little book is universal, easy to understand, perfect for sharing with family and friends, or to read out loud with children and loved ones. These practices are gentle reminders to help us reconnect: to slow down, listen, sense, feel, and be attentive to the Earth, our first Mother.



AYURVEDA LIFESTYLE WISDOM by Acharya Shunya; Paperback, 8x10, 359 pp, \$24.95; Sounds True 2017, SoundsTrue.com.

CHAPTER ONE OF Acharya Shunya’s book is titled *The Science and Spirituality of Ayurveda*. That dual approach continues throughout the book and makes it especially valuable for a lifestyle of physical and mental wellbeing

that supports your path and practices. Topics include everything from (yes) elimination to dental health, food and drink, sleep, sex, diet, beauty, exercise, detox and healing. Yet throughout, focus also remains on the spiritual unfolding for which good health is so valuable.

Ayurveda is an ancient, deep and complex science and its details can be overwhelming. But in this book, along with facts, charts and illustrated yoga poses, the author shares her experiences, wisdom and knowledge in a loving way.

Appendices provide recipes, resource guides, and a glossary of Sanskrit words. If you would like the time-tested support of Ayurveda for your spiritual path, here is an ongoing source of expert guidance.

Noteworthy

RAISING RESILIENCE: The Wisdom and Science of Happy Families and Thriving Children by Christopher Willard, PsyD—As the author states, this book is “a guide to goodness,” showing how goodness can spread through fostering such qualities as: generosity, ethics, wisdom, patience, honesty, kindness and equanimity. He draws upon the world’s wisdom traditions, especially Buddhism, to present realistic possibilities for our time. The language is non-technical, intelligent and down-to-our-earth, just right for a busy parent. (*Paperback, 256 pages, \$16.95, Sounds True 2017, SoundsTrue.com*)

I HOPE I SCREW THIS UP: How Falling in Love With Your Fears Can Change the World by Kyle Cease—The author achieved his dream of being a headlining comedian and actor, yet his heart led him to a new career: a keynote speaker motivating audiences through his unique blend of comedy and transformation. He shares his own truths and experiences with disarming humor. Reading this book is like talking with a wise, joking friend who leads you right to your own heart. (*Hardback, 246 pages, \$26.00, North Star Way an imprint of Simon and Schuster, Inc. 2017, simonandschuster.com*)

UBUNTU CONTRIBUTISM: A Blueprint for Human Prosperity by Michael Tellinger—Ubuntu is an idea for living in unity and abundance, based upon beliefs by indigenous peoples that “If it is not good for everyone, it’s not good at all.” In Africa this is called Ubuntu. The author has presented this idea in 175 countries. He sees a world without money or barter, in which each person contributes their skill or talent for the benefit of the community. No person or skill is valued more than another; communities are self-sustaining and free from control of corporations and world banks. (*Trade paperback, 362 pp, \$21, Zulu Planet Publishers, MichaelTellinger.com*)

Books for Children



ZOO ZEN: A Yoga Story For Kids by Kristen Fischer, Illustrated by Susi Schaefer; Hardcover, 10x10, 36 pp, \$17.95, eBook \$9.99; Sounds True 2017, SoundsTrue.com.

CHARMING ILLUSTRATIONS and simple rhymes in *Zoo Zen* inspire young ones to learn yoga

Audio Reviews

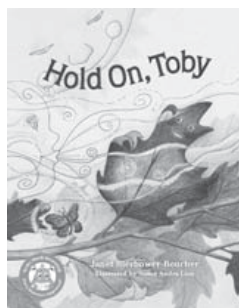
by practicing poses like our animal friends: balancing like a bear, rising like a cobra, soaring like an eagle, roaring like a lion, bending like a camel, swimming like a dolphin, hands under toes like a gorilla, and more. The author encourages children to use yoga to calm down and feel strong. And most of all, "Remember to breathe, use only your nose, inhale and exhale, stay calm in each pose." A recap of the poses as Lyla's Yoga Flow, with detailed instructions, is given at the end. The best children's hatha yoga book we've seen! Recommended ages: 4-8.



MINDFUL GAMES, Sharing Mindfulness and Meditation with Children, Teens and Families by Susan Kaiser Greenland; Paperback, 5x8, 202 pp, \$16.95; Shambhala Publications 2016, Shambhala.com.

WHEN CHILDREN AND teens focus on the present moment, they learn to sense impressions as clues to stop and listen before speaking and acting, and thus become less reactive and more receptive to what

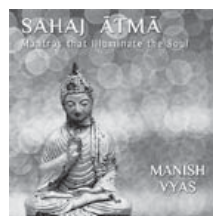
is going on within and around them. *Mindful Games* teaches six life skills: focusing, quieting, seeing, reframing, caring and connecting to develop wisdom and compassion for oneself and the world around us. Each chapter includes stories, guidance and plenty of fun games to encourage mindful breathing, paying attention, developing an open mind, deepening appreciation, and nurturing a peaceful heart. Also helpful is advice on learning to do a body scan, connecting with others, and finding freedom from hurtful or painful thoughts. The last chapter includes tips for leading mindful games, as well as FAQ's. This book is an invaluable guide for children and teens to develop focusing skills, learn to regulate emotions, and respond to situations calmly, with kindness and compassion.



HOLD ON, TOBY by Janet Bierbower-Boucher, Illustrated by Susan Andra Lion; Hardcover, 9x11, 32 pp, \$16.99; Windy Island Publishing LLC 2016, Satiama.com.

TOBY THE LEAF grows on a big tree in the great woods along with hundreds of other leaves. As he grows big and strong and turns from pale green to deep green, Toby experiences the world through a

wiggly striped caterpillar, people who picnic in the shade beneath his tree, the warmth of the sun, the thrill of the soft breeze. Everyone and everything tells him the best is yet to come: "Hold on, Toby." Then one night Jack Frost comes and tells him, "Tomorrow you will be the best you can be." Through the natural cycles of life children discover the miracle of transformation in this beautifully illustrated book.



SAHAJ ATMA: Mantras That Illuminate the Soul by Manish Vyas, 62 min, 2017; CD \$17/MP3 \$9, ManishVyas.com

MANISH VYAS IS JOINED by a talented ensemble of some of India's finest musicians and vocalists on his latest recording, *Sahaj Atma*. These Sanskrit mantras are as old as time, and yet feel as fresh as a lotus blossom at sunrise. The mantras include *Sahana Vavatu*, *Lokaha Samastaha*, *Sahaj Atma*, *Vande Gurudev*, *Jaya Ambe*, and *Shanti Mantra*. A sublime atmosphere is created by the chanting of these heavenly mantras, imbued with the sounds of the sitar, bansuri-flute, violin, harmonium, tanpura, swarmandal, santoor and guitar. These mantras bestow peace and purity, creating a perfect atmosphere for meditation, yoga, healing, and deep relaxation.



UMA by Mercedes Bahleda and Ferenz Kallos, 87 min, 2017; CD \$17/MP3 \$9, WhiteSwanRecords.com

MERCEDES IS A professional singer, yogini, and artist dedicated to helping others radically transform their hearts and minds through wisdom, meditation and music. Her latest album, *Uma*, is an exquisite collaboration with composer Ferenz Kallos. Mercedes' incredible vocal range and devotion transport the listener in these ancient mantras to the Guru, Lord Krishna, and the Goddess. The title song, *Uma*, is a playful, childlike homage to Goddess Parvati, the embodiment of Shakti. The Tibetan prayer, *Sky Dancer/ Kandroma*, pulses with life and power. Mercedes' soaring intonation of a Greek mantra to Jesus with lush cello accompaniment bestows profound peace. Opera singer Jenna Karl guests on a twenty-six-minute *sadhana*, *Om Shanti*, with airy flutes, deep strings, and rolling harmonies over the steady drum of a heartbeat. For spiritual absorption, this is the finest album we have heard in a long while!



MEDITATIONS FOR TWO by Golaná, 50 min, 2014; CD \$13/MP3 \$7, SpringHillMedia.com.

GOLANÁ (CHEROKEE for Raven) is a member of the Deer Clan West of the Echota Cherokee Tribe of Alabama. His music offers a deep spaciousness and reverence imbibed from nature's serenity.

In his latest album, *Meditations For Two*, he plays Native American and other flutes in duets with some of LA's finest musicians: Cameron Stone on cello, Scott Hartley on piano, Charlie Bisharat on violin, David Chamberlin on guitars and keyboards, and Stephanie Bennett on harp. As he writes, "When I play, it's the long, drawn-out sounds of the flute that capture the feelings, the emotion and the passion in the compositions.... I want the listener to slow down, match the mood of the music..." Over a decade in the making, this lovely album evokes yearning and grace.