

Namaste

It's December 21st, 2012. My partner and I woke up this morning, gleefully looked at each other, and then exclaimed: "We're still here!"

This is the way I always want to live, not just on days when the world is supposed to end. My 96 year-old mom gets up **every** morning the way we did today. My mom opens her eyes, looks in the bedroom mirror, and gratefully says: "I'm still here! Another day!"

It is good to know what we can lose: it helps us be grateful for what we have. It's also good to know that every ending has a beginning. This day, December 21st of 2012, can very well be a beginning of a new era, just as every morning is a beginning of a new day. Humanity has an opportunity to bring in a new world order along with a new year. This would be a new world order that learns from the mistakes of the old one. We have painfully seen the results of those mistakes, especially this past year.

**The new order can be** to love one who is a loner instead of ignoring or avoiding him.

**The new order can be** to emphasize education and psychological wholeness rather than defense and individuality.

**The new order can be** to consider others as of our own family, all born of one Creator, rather than as us or them; black or white; Christian, Jew, or Muslim; American or immigrant; young or old; rich or poor.

**The new order can be** to respect the earth as our own Mother, rather than pillaging and polluting her.

If there is anything we can learn from the past year, it is that we must care about the welfare of all beings. We **must** maintain faith in the natural goodness of human beings. While one person committed a horrific crime in Newtown CT, millions of people around the world continue to respond with tremendous compassion. For example, this is a photo of children in Pakistan honoring those who lost their lives on the other side of the globe:



I found this photo in an inspiring commentary by Cheryl Richardson. She insists that we must remember that:

- Love outshines hate
- We are all connected
- Love transcends borders
- We know our priorities

- We look for positive change

To read the entire commentary, click [Cheryl Richardson](#).

To see one example of the loving potential of teens, respectfully celebrating the success of an autistic classmate, click [You Tube](#).

Mahatma Gandhi said “[If a single person realizes the highest level of love, it could be sufficient to neutralize the hatred of centuries.](#)”

Each of us has the capability to change the world around us, let alone the hatred behind us. It can start with a smile or any simple kindness for whomever you meet or pass by. It can start by being present with your child, partner, family member, or friend. This holiday season, as you get together with family, practice being present. Practice listening. Put away the smart phone. Let go of having to be somewhere else or having to do something else. In conversation, be fully, wholly present: open your heart wide and take in what the other has to say. Let them have a voice. Let your heart be your voice.

And please honor yourSelf. Your yoga practice will remind you of your natural goodness, the same goodness that lies waiting, if not yet manifest, in the hearts of all human beings. Your yoga practice will affect your whole life and all those you encounter. It does not end after the last shavasana. It continues in how you breathe, walk, talk, work, and play. As Swami Nirmalananda states it, “Svaroopo yoga is integrative” -- it’s meant to be stretched into every facet of our lives, not just in our muscles; not just in the studio but wherever we go.

For an enlightening introduction to yourSelf, consider a weekend meditation retreat at Kripalu in January, taught by my friend and revered yogini Yogeshwari (Lissa Fountain). For more information, click [Yogeshwari at Kripalu](#). If you cannot make it to Kripalu, I am teaching a meditation class at Tranquility Yoga in January, plus another Blissful Afternoon class. For more information, click [Tranquility Yoga](#).

I want to wish you and your family and friends a Namaste holiday season and new year. What I mean is that I wish you continued remembrance of the Sacred within you and of the same Sacredness that is within each and every other being you meet. That will make your days holy. That will be some Christmas. That will be some new year! And, not to forget Chanukkah, that will be some Light to Light!

***Much peace, love, and light***

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**Some inspiring quotes from a variety of authors; drink them in, pass them on:**

“You are the light of consciousness, in a unique and individualized form. That light shines through your eyes, fills your heart and sparks your greatest ideas. The light of your own being arises from its inner source, spills into your life and fills your relationships with light and love and joy. This is true in your best moments. It is how you want to live all the time. Yoga gives you the ability to do so. Yoga also explains why and how it works.” ~ Swami Nirmalananda

"Every heart that has beat strongly and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind."-- Robert Louis Stevenson

“Go out into the world today and love the people you meet. Let your presence light new light in the hearts of people...Let no one come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.” ~ Mother Teresa

“We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.” ~ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

“It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe people are really good at heart. I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness; I hear the ever-approaching thunder, which will destroy us, too. I can feel the suffering of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again.” ~ Anne Frank, age 14 - Saturday, July 15, 1944

“I believe the root of all happiness on this earth to lie in the realization of a spiritual life with a consciousness of something wider than materialism; in the capacity to live in a world that makes you unselfish because you are not overanxious about your personal place; that makes you tolerant because you realize your own comic fallibilities; that gives you tranquility without complacency because you believe in something so much larger than yourself.” ~ Sir Hugh Walpole