

# THE POINT

A bimonthly e-newsletter produced by  
the Center for Spiritual Learning, Tagaytay, Philippines

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## Simple secret to stability and success

A poor boy had ambitions of owning a company. He worked hard, starting as a messenger, and eventually became the owner's trusted secretary. One day, the owner fell seriously ill and decided to write his will. Childless, he bequeathed the company to his secretary. Today, the humble secretary is the new boss, thanks to visualization.

"What you think, will happen."

"Harness the power of the mind."

These are popular catchphrases for self-help books and motivation seminars. But how to achieve success using mental faculties is often not thoroughly explained.

"Thoughts can move mountains," says BK Vedanti, international lecturer and Raja Yoga practitioner. Success begins with stability of the mind which, she says, is innate in every human being. "We have that capacity, but we are not aware of it."

The process of becoming stable begins with understanding the self, she explains. "What's keeping this body alive? The soul is the energy that directs the driver of this car, the physical body. If the soul is stable, the body will be, too."

Three faculties operate the soul, Vedanti says: mind, intellect and all recorded impressions. When these synergize, the soul becomes



Vedanti: enigmatic at the retreat center

calm and thinks clearly. "The mind holds the power to think; the intellect holds the power to judge right from wrong. Impressions are shaped by our nature."

She stresses that stability begins with controlling the mind, which many religious paths compare to a restless monkey. "You may be sitting here physically, but your mind can go anywhere, uncontrolled, racing from one thought to another for without productive results. From morning till night, 90 per cent of the thoughts that flood the mind are a waste of time. Only ten percent is useful."

### The better choice

If the mind is the naughty child, Vedanti says, the intellect is the mother and disciplinarian. "For so long, the mind has been spoiled by poor judgement and lack of decision power. Should I do this or that? Should I take this or not? Get up early in the morning and start the day with a clear intellect—then your nature will change. You will be a totally different person."

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#### PROGRAMS

##### NOVEMBER

- Understanding the Law of Returns: Karma-Nov 12, 9 am to 4pm
- Inner Peace Inner Power-Nov 24-26, 4pm Fri to 3pm Sun

##### DECEMBER

- Parenting the Inner Child-Parents' Program-Dec 2, 2 pm to 5pm
- Knowing Myself, Knowing God-Dec 3, 9 am to 3pm
- Living Stress Less-Dec 10, 9 am to 4 pm
- Children and Youth program-Dec 16, 2 pm to 5

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See our local website [www.tagaytayretreatcenter.org](http://www.tagaytayretreatcenter.org), our national site [www.brahmakumarisph.org](http://www.brahmakumarisph.org) and our international website [www.brahmakumaris.org](http://www.brahmakumaris.org).



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Impressions are the complete history of all our mental and physical activities, she says. The experiences of these activities stake out within the soul and turn into natural tendencies. "We allow most of what we think and do to become habits, without putting much thought about the quality of awareness. The intellect is sidestepped; the capability to separate right from wrong and make correct choices eludes us."

On the other hand, Vedanti says, "Raja Yoga meditation inspires us to become more conscious of our energy. It helps us to better understand the faculties of the soul and use them to advantage. When wasteful or negative impressions are discerned and managed, things happen smoothly."

She recalls going to meet the Indian High Commissioner (head of a diplomatic mission which is the equivalent of an ambassador). Her companion was very worried about parking space at the embassy. Vedanti told her to just believe they would encounter no problem. As they approached, a car pulled away from a slot right next to the entrance. That may seem like a small thing, she says, but the point is, "Make every thought positive because it is the seed of everything."

## Before and after

Vedanti remembers having a dour personality before she found Raja Yoga. She says this negative trait took its toll on her digestive



Sharing a light moment at the retreat center

system and overall health. Once she started meditating, she felt the urgency to change and benefit from her spiritual endeavour. Her friends and family were delighted. She has since been a jolly person, endearing herself to people with her now-trademark sense of humour.

"From age 20, I have held on to my happiness and nobody has taken it away," she says. A few have tested her fortitude, but Vedanti won them over with humility and poise.

Not even the demise of her father diminished that happiness. When she received notice via a long-distance phone call from India, she remained calm and simply carried on with her duties in Kenya, where she was based at the time. To those who wondered if she was being too callous, she said, "My father didn't like sadness... and so I spread happiness, not tears."

She credits Raja Yoga for her inner strength. During the last rites for her mother, she gave a lecture to an audience of 500. She consoled grieving family and friends by explaining about the eternity of the soul, and about her mother's body as a vehicle that had served its purpose.

The key to controlling the mind, Vedanti says, is remembering God. "Make God your Friend and the mind will automatically go upward, to the Supreme Power, from whom you will draw good ideas and positive thoughts. Think less, think with happiness, think for success, think for today, think powerful! Don't think about yesterday, don't worry about tomorrow. If today is good, then tomorrow will be better."

Asked once how much she remembered God, she replied, "I don't remember God; He remembers me because I work for Him. As my Boss, He needs me. If He keeps remembering me, how can I forget Him?"

When people argue that God is too abstract a concept, Vedanti counters that He is an experienced reality. "We can't see the air we breathe but we know it keeps us alive. We may not see God but we feel His love, blessings and power."

To keep the mind stable, Vedanti's advice is to never go to bed with the negative thought of tiredness. "Even if your day was hectic, say it was good. Maybe a couple of things went wrong, but it doesn't matter. I will learn from that. Open your eyes in the morning with optimism, not with worry. Before you leave for work, sit for a few minutes and thank God. Tell Him to stay with you and support you. He is listening. Smile at yourself in the mirror. Keep that smile on all day and share it with everybody. It will become your nature and bring you stability and success."

## Sending good vibes

**The power of thoughts can be harnessed to prepare souls to receive a message or to help those in need. Serving through mental power can also fast-track personal growth by paying attention to the self. Throughout the day, keep the mind clean in order to attract God's influence.**

**By honing in on your thoughts, you focus on what's going on in your mind. You learn to conserve mental energy by sifting the unnecessary thoughts from pure ones. God's vibrations will make you different from the rest. You cre-**

**ate an impact on others not just with your words and actions but with your spiritual aura. Many will not remember what you've said, but they will never forget your presence because they felt God's company.**

**If there is a conflict, and you've been tasked to resolve it, sit in God's remembrance. Be an angel and send light to the souls. Because God has prepared you, half of the work has already been done. Keep the experience of being with God and using His power. God's presence does the magic.**

**—B.K. Jayanti**



Participants enjoy the balance of interaction and reflection

# Families bond on 'Inner Peace, Inner Power'

**'Everyone was honest and genuine; there was no judgment, only acceptance.'**

By Madett Gardiola

**T**AGAYTAY City, just over 50 kilometers from Manila, has long been a favorite getaway for people who seek time out from their fast-paced urban grind. In recent years, families have been discovering a unique way of spending quality moments together here, through the "Inner Peace, Inner Power" retreats at the Center for Spiritual Learning on the last weekend of every month.

Elaine recalls how she tagged along recently just to support her mother. She had no pressing need to join, but as she became immersed in the reflective activities on the "Tree of Life." Participants likened their virtues with parts of the tree and how pests symbolized challenges in life. It was an introspective activity wherein one looked into the self and eventually learned to appreciate others beyond the surface. At the end of the retreat, she left with a sense of how rich everyone really was in familial love. Her takeaway insight: the value of appreciating and loving the self.

A senior participant, Osang, admits that even if most of the participants were younger than she was, they had narrated personal experiences that she actually learned from, and so she feels "blessed." She says she found forgiveness for her husband during one of the meditation exercises—far from easy until then because, now she knows, she had not forgiven herself. After much exoneration, her vision shifted to how beautiful life is and how wonderful the people around her are.

This sentiment is shared by several others, who likewise discovered that solutions to their problems were inside of them; they just needed to dig deeper.

Talia reflects, "I saw that I couldn't move forward because I was carrying too much baggage but did not want to let go. I had got-

ten used to Band-Aid solutions, which were temporary and did not address the root of any of my concerns. I was settling for temporary happiness. In this retreat, I saw what I needed to do."

"Walking through the center's front door," Nelda recounts, "I had so many questions. But I learned that my issues were all about myself—that I was probably my own worst enemy. Now I know how to handle myself: Just stay positive."

Jan, who came all the way from Iloilo City, vows "to maintain a positive outlook," realizing that the quality of one's life depends on the quality of his thoughts. "It was difficult for me to come here and I thought of giving up," he says. "But I made it, and I finished the retreat. It is very refreshing."

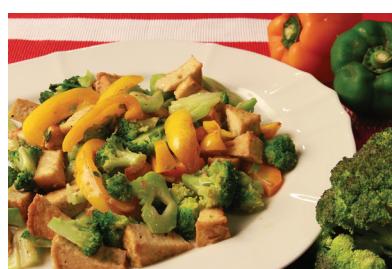
As in previous IPIP retreats, even participants who were not biologically related felt a sense of family while engaging in common activities for two days.

"There was no judgment, only acceptance." "Everyone was honest and genuine." "We all shared the same concept of peace." These feelings seem to have left everyone grateful, relaxed, empowered.

Having benefitted from the gathering, several participants are sure they will share information about future IPIP events with friends and relatives across the country, some as far as southern Philippines.

The vegetarian meals served during the weekend were equally appreciated. The participants are of the same mind that pure food contributed to their own relaxed and peaceful state.

Everything felt just right, they agree, every word meant for them to hear. Worries have been replaced with awareness, clarity and grace. Their common newfound mantra: "I am God's beloved. We are all God's beloved" – said with deep gratitude for the opportunity to collectively rediscover inner peace and inner power.



Vegetarian food prepared with healthy ingredients and cooked in meditation always leaves the most impact in the retreat.

# Check and change: Don't miss the mark

BK Gopi shares personal transformation methods with Philippine family

By Leti Boniol

**T**O SIN is to go against the Ten Commandments of God, according to Catholic teachings. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. These are just three of the commandments. Disobedience, it is said, will send one to "hell."

In Aramaic, from which the Syrian and other Middle Eastern languages are derived, "sin" originates from words denoting actions that "miss the mark." A person misses the target when waste thoughts obstruct his vision, explained London-based meditation practitioner BK Gopi Patel, who was on a recent speaking tour of the Philippines. Often, she stressed during a workshop, a single waste thought is enough to ruin one's aim.

Sin is a mis-take, a mis-behaviour or mis-understanding, committed when one is not self-aware, Gopi said. It is to be absent, or absent-minded—to be attached to, or impressed with, or controlled by, another. It is falling from a divine status, she added, a form of self-sabotage—which is also what addiction is. You know, but you cannot help it.

## The five vices

She said sin is rooted in body consciousness, that is, considering the self nothing more than a physical being. From this state of mind spring the vices of anger, lust, greed, attachment and ego.

Attachment has set in when one misses (or often remembers) people, places or things, and manipulates circumstances to be always close to them. Other "symptoms" are possessiveness, obsession, becoming clingy, and experiencing separation anxiety.

Greed starts with wanting, and then escalates to being needy, miserly and unwilling to share—which leads to accumulating or hoarding. At which point corruption sets in.

Ego starts with the attitude, "I am right." One then becomes argumentative and prone to rebelling.

Lust starts with attraction, fascination, being impressed, and ends up in desire.

Anger includes impatience, irritation, annoyance, avoidance, bossiness, forcefulness, contempt and rage. To a certain degree, it also includes gossiping and defaming.

## Natural, neutral effort

"When you remember who you are and realize who you belong to, you come back into place," said Gopi. "Your effort should then be to ask yourself, 'Where am I off the mark?'"

She said one's effort should be natural and neutral. "Light and without bias, no matter what. You let go, allowing things to happen, not interfering too much, to be as they are. Give (everyone) a lot

of space. You should not put yourself down and say, 'I am not good,' or give up altogether...or tell yourself you're not ready, or not worthy. The more you think (this way), the more you are off the mark."

Her simple advice for self-transformation: "Keep a chart." She herself has done this for 17 years, she told the workshop participants. "This way you can check whatever weaknesses you have left. At the end of the day, make yourself accountable for all your actions. Only then will you be able to change. You may be a fast effort maker or sometimes slow. The ideal speed is one that does not fluctuate, no matter what happens."



Change begins with self-examination.

## OPULENT OPTIMISM

By FELIZ RUIZ

Optimism is the vitality and energy  
Exerted on a goal for its realization  
Achieved by spirited-dreamers  
With sustained faith, courage, determination  
Who dive into the thrill and triumph to live life.  
Optimists enjoy every beat, do thrive  
Each twists and turns await in them a new avenue for learning  
Isn't this excitement to face challenge indeed amazing?  
They see new opportunities as another step for growing.  
They are gifted with vibrancy and positivity while connecting.  
Optimists go with the flow of life inspiring people  
Courage is endless, perseverance increases  
Setting aims, goals to achieve like the ever dreamed star  
Sustained effort and faith cooperate to achieve them.

Optimists look not on the past nor future, just today, here and now.  
With confidence tread the path of life trusting in the Divine  
Let life be uncomplicated  
Be brave and full of health  
Be elegant in your manners yet simple in your lifestyle  
Observe simple living yet high thinking.



Optimism means going with the flow and loving it.