

Gangaji Radio

A Conversation With Gangaji Series

Host Hillary Larson

Episode 8

TRUSTING LIFE

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[00:05] INTRODUCTION MUSIC

[00:08] HILLARY LARSON, HOST: There are countless thoughts, emotions and circumstances that we put our trust in on a daily basis. And, we do it without even really thinking. For example, it's easy to trust life when we're experiencing happiness and when things are going the way we want them to. But, in many ways, that type of trust can be seen as superficial because when that particular emotion or circumstance shifts, as all things inevitably do, then what happens to our trust? What is it that is innate in all of us that is far more reliable than any thought, any emotion, any identity, or any life circumstance?

[00:42] GANGAJI: There is that which has always been here, which has never left your side, which has always been present whatever the feeling or the circumstance. And, when you turn your attention to trusting that, that's surrender to yourself.

[00:58] HILLARY: During times in life where our trust is shaken whether it be due to unforeseen circumstances, betrayal or just our own subtle or overt sense of doubt, how do we truly trust in ourselves and trust in life? What and where is true trust? I'm Hillary Larson and this is *A Conversation With Gangaji*.

[01:23] HILLARY: It seems to me that the subject of trust has been a really hot topic. And, Gangaji, we put out a call on Facebook, on your Facebook page – Gangaji Community – for people to ask you questions about trust. And, you know, we just got so many questions. And, I really appreciate people really wanting to participate in that, and it seems to me in some ways I would say that the subject of trust has been an undercurrent of every conversation that we've had so far. So, there are so many things that we consciously or unconsciously trust on a daily basis. You know, you've talked about how we trust our thoughts, our emotions, you know, situations. We trust our perceptions of things, information that comes our way, what others tell us, and the list goes on and on, but what I wanted to do is take a minute to see where our trust in the world and in life comes from and how we might struggle with this question, maybe even for some of us for a lifetime. So, I'd like to propose that in many cases, maybe most cases, that doubt is the result of betrayal on some level and that's what determines our level of trust.

[02:35] GANGAJI: Well, this is a really big subject as most of them are. And, it's really also determined by what you mean when you say trust, and what I mean when I say trust or betrayal or even doubt. Since trust is so, the way you were talking about trust and the fact that we trust our thoughts, and then we are betrayed by our thoughts. It doesn't mean someone else betrays us. The nature of thoughts betrays us, or we trust that it will always be summer, and then the seasons change. So, the nature of the laws of this planet betray us, betray the naïve trust. But,

often what happens is when that naïve trust is betrayed, we contract when we actually have an opportunity to trust something that is trustworthy. And, when I use the word trustworthy, really, I'm reflecting on what my teacher said when he said to me, gods that come and go, he could have said thoughts that come and go, or seasons that come and go, or emotions that come and go, are ultimately untrustworthy. Find out what doesn't come and go, and put your trust in that. Since, we have put our trust in so many areas and that trust has been betrayed just by the fact that those areas change or end, I, I see that most people are so contracted by the time they begin their spiritual search that they've forgotten how to trust, or they've lost the muscle of trust. And, really, the invitation is to rediscover your capacity, not naively to trust, but fully as an adult to, to recognize the vicissitudes of life, and trust what is holding it all. And, that trust is the same as surrender or being led by some greater force whether it's called love or truth or freedom or the truth of yourself. Really, then we get into what do you mean when you say that. Is that clear?

[04:59] HILLARY: Yeah, that's really clear. And, actually, I think that it leads me into the first question because the first question is pretty meaty. And, this question comes from Sally. She's actually here in Portland. And, I just want to preface this question by saying that, I don't know exactly if when we're born if we just automatically trust, and if that gets corrupted as time goes on. But, I'd have to say that it's impossible to be on this Earth and not have experience betrayal in some form or another. Like, many times over, and for some, it's in a mild form, even by our mom, not picking us up from school on time or other people might have like very extreme circumstances of being betrayed, but we can't avoid betrayal.

[05:47] GANGAJI: Well, I just want to interject here that betrayal most often has nothing to do with another person. So, it's the betrayal of our bodies not being what we think they should be, or being what they were a moment before. Or, the betrayal of our own emotions or the betrayal of our own idealizations. So, if we remove the other person component of it then we're left with just the truth of the matter, the matter itself is subject to change. And if we try to hope or force or make it not change then we have a sense of betrayal, but that betrayal is only coming because we thought it should be a certain way. So, really the betrayal itself is a bad word to use for maturing because really that's part of how we grow up is we recognize you know, the milk is not there every time we scream, or the pain doesn't go away just because we want it to go away, or we're not in good health all the time just because we want that. And, rather than feeling victimized by that, we can actually mature, we can grow up.

[07:10] HILLARY: I love the way that you're not speaking about well, just trust no matter what. It's a mature way of approaching trust.

[07:20] GANGAJI: Yes, because some things aren't trustworthy and will never be trustworthy. So, I'm not suggesting you trust everything, but there is that which has always been here. Which has never left your side which has always been present whatever the feeling or the circumstance or the mother being there or not being there. And, when you turn your attention to trusting that, that's surrender to yourself. Not, not trusting your idea of yourself or the particular image you have of yourself, but the proof of yourself.

[08:00] HILLARY: I think this first question that you receive Gangaji, will help us all apply that in a very practical way because even though this letter, honestly is pretty extreme and the woman just was so brave and expressing what happened in her early childhood which I'm not actually

going to cover the details of that, but it's the end result of that which I think that we all experience in one degree or another. So, let me just share a little bit of her story here. She was taken care of by her neighbors because her parents were very busy people, and they inflicted a horrific degree of mental torture upon her and you know, her story involves being tied up and locked in a closet. So, as a young child in the hands of these neighbors with parents that were too busy to take care of her, she was enduring this daily hell, and it sounds like, you know, it was betrayal after betrayal for her. And so, the letter goes on to say – “as an adopted child of important parents with busy political careers, it was easy for the neighbors to erode my trust in family, truth and even in my own senses of sight and smell. As I got older and the abuse became more physical, I didn't like or trust my parents at all. Luckily, I've had some awesome friends who have had awesome families who I did trust. And in time, I began to trust. It's led to a lot of eye opening experiences, but I'd like to think I still approach things in a trusting way. However, and here's the big one, I wonder if I Really –capital R- trust. I've noticed that even those I love and think I trust, that I doubt the things that they say and look for reassurances that I can trust them. In the case of my wonderful husband, I have every reason and do trust him. Yet, I find myself in ways testing him.”

[09:55] GANGAJI: I mean the very wondering is the proof of the distrust in I wonder if I really trust. You're not trusting the trusting right there. But, here's an example of somebody who had harm done to them, great harm really. I don't know if you used the word horrific, but it's a horrific story. And, we can recognize as a young child, she had a developing nervous system. She had all kinds of imprints about the world as an untrustworthy place. And, her parents, the gods of that world is being untrustworthy. And, yet, she has discovered the avenue for trusting. So, it's not the capacity for trust that was ultimately eroded. It was covered by self-doubt and probably great fear and despair and anger and protection, naturally. But, she has discovered that she, she can trust. And, really what I hear in the question is she wants support in a deeper level of trust. And, the proof that she has experienced the trust she has experienced, rather, what that proves is that trust is here. Trust is a capacity that doesn't go away. It gets covered and in horrible experiences, maybe it's irredeemably covered. But, here's a horrible experience where it's not irredeemably covered. She has the experience of the crack or the opening that is trust. And, she knows the difference because she gets the feedback from her friends and she's questioning her own mind. Now, saying all of that, her best friend could also distrust and have never had any of these terrible things happen to them. There are certain people who have mental fixations who tend to doubt just like there are certain people who have good ears, certain people who have extraordinary eyesight, or particular talents. There are people who doubt. And, that as a collective whole, they serve a particular role. It's a useful survival role, but it's doubting regardless of circumstances, and then using whatever circumstances are there as some proof of it. If she's willing to suspend her judgment of the doubt and the narrative of what generated the doubt and the lack of trust, and simply open to the fear that fuels the doubt. The fear of being vulnerable. The fear of being harmed. The fear of hurting. It's even a little deeper than being victimized because we recognize the hurt doesn't necessarily come from other. It's just hurt. And, we have a fear of that out of our survival drive. But, we can also open to that. And, in our willingness to open to that without indulging it, without escaping it, without fighting it, we can discover what is free of that, and there's where the capacity to trust.

[13:25] GANGAJI con't: This perhaps is part of an infant's experience. But, we're speaking as adults. So, it's not a naïve trust. It's a trust that in the face of the recognition of neighbors not

being trustworthy and parent's not being trustworthy, and mates and friends and world events not being trustworthy, weather not being trustworthy, knowledge not being trustworthy, brain function not being trustworthy. And, the fear that that generates can be met directly rather than following the story of what reveal that fear. You get the difference there? Because that then is, we're back to self-inquiry. We actually retreat inward from the story which legitimately may reveal why and how the trust was eroded, but at this point, at this point of adulthood, that story no longer serves. What serves is the willingness to meet what is deeper than the story, and really to meet what is still here – the innocence, different from naivety, the pure open innocence that is the intelligence of being. And, that's trustworthy. And, you don't have to say, oh, I hope that's trustworthy or I'll believe that's trustworthy. You can trust it and see, rather than trusting the story, rather than trusting that you are a certain way or not a certain way, just open to this fear that's at the root of it. It seems to be the root, but deeper than the fear is some mysterious love – love of being, love that is.

[15:16] HILLARY: I was really struck by what you were saying with regard to ultimately it's all about going back into ourselves when you talk about putting our attention inward rather than throwing it outward. And, I'm kind of saying that in an awkward manner, but what was compelling to me about that letter, and then I'm going to move on to the next question was her statement about starting to doubt her own sense of sight and smell. And, how to me, obviously, it sounds like she has recovered in amazing ways, but I think that applying inquiry to that is so amazing because it's the possibility to see the lie of that.

[15:58] GANGAJI: You know, whatever our situation in growing up, and I can't speak for past generations, but certainly, in, in the western world at this time, we can look back and we can see how the way we were educated, the way we were brought up, the times our parents were not there for us. The times we weren't there for others. All of that has contributed to a narrative of distrust, a narrative of distrusting what we feel, distrusting what we think because in a real sense, what we feel is untrustworthy, and what we sense is untrustworthy. We can see something and it's not there. We have the capacity to hallucinate. We have the capacity to totally make up a worldview. We can, you can implant memories into people. So, finally, none of that is trustworthy. If we're willing for a moment of inquiry to stop reaching for those things to be trustworthy, and instead turn the attention inside to what IS trustworthy. That's when the shift occurs. And so, you aren't trusting that the people around you will always be good to you and never betray you or that your world won't end or that you won't die, you're trusting what is here. You're trusting that life is life. That to be is to be. And, that's primary to all life events. And, in that you are resetting the system, so that your brain, the brain itself gets to open into the right hemisphere. And there's, trust is not even an issue. There's no discrimination between oneself and other, and senses are just, and sensory information are just part of the waves or the weather. It's just phenomena. It's not an issue of me trusting it. It's phenomena, and I am.

[18:11] HILLARY: I want to go a little deeper into that if I could, Gangaji. This next question is from Marnie. She's from Massachusetts. And, she says, "I need to trust myself totally and know this is in line with the universe. Do you have any suggestions?"

[18:27] GANGAJI: I would have to know what she means by trust myself. If she's talking about trust in her feelings or trusting her sensory information or trusting her imagery of herself or idealization of herself, I'd say it's not trustworthy. If she's talking about trusting the core of life

itself, well, find out where that is. Turn your attention to that, open to that. Trust it for an instant. Trust it for an afternoon, or a day and see. See for yourself.

[19:03] HILLARY: You know, I'd have to say, Gangaji, when I was preparing for this interview I was listening to a couple of CDs. I was listening to Beyond Practice, and Still In Awareness, and I found myself getting tired because I was really wrapped up in my questions for you. And then there was this moment where I started laughing and I actually didn't fully know I was laughing but it was because I was, this thought came up like this isn't really even what she's talking about. This isn't really what Gangaji is talking about, meaning the constant questioning. And, it's like I know it points to that. I know there's value in it. But at the same time, there's a part of that that's actually kind of funny.

[19:45] GANGAJI: Well, if you're laughing then you're not caught by it. And, that's great. Yes, we can catch ourselves in this spiral of trying to align it all just right. So, that it's trustworthy. But, the world doesn't align itself according to our commands. And, surely as adults, we know that. There some other force in action, some mystery whether it's the mystery of science or the mystery of spirituality or the mystery of direct experience. It's bigger than our thoughts. If we were willing to trust that, we can discover if it's trustworthy. And if it's not trustworthy then it has something to do with some idea of what it should be, of how it should last forever or point of only what is good for me. You know, each one of us is destined to die as form. And, if we recognize that and we don't fight that as untrustworthy, as awesome as that is and as horrific as it may be when we first contemplate it, in the willingness to rest in that is beautiful. It's trustworthy, and it actually allows a life to be lived from a place other than the control of our thinking minds.

[21:15] HILLARY: You know, there's a point that this last letter brings up, I think that will really be a great ending to this particular conversation about trust, Gangaji. And, this is from Josephine, and, you know what? I don't know how to say this and I'm afraid I'm going to butcher this, but it's Abeeza Spang. She's originally from Ireland, so she's probably got one of those great Irish accents. She says "during a three-month silent retreat, I came to realize that there is no need to trust. There is no one to do the trusting and nothing to trust in. There is no question of trust anymore. It was a very liberating realization although perhaps still an intellectual idea for me. I wonder if Gangaji can let us know if this is the truth."

[22:02] GANGAJI: That's amazing that right at the end, there's the distrust part where you said although still an intellectual idea. That's the mind coming back in that moment which was a true legitimate spiritual experience. There was no separation between oneself and what is. And so, there was no one to trust or distrust. It's beautiful. That's absolutely correct. Trust is an intermediary point. It's a call to the thinking mind to open. And, she had the true experience, and then followed it with that one sentence about although this is an intellectual experience. So, really the invitation is to, to not deny yourself, to commit the heresy of actually stating I've had a true experience. It was not intellectual. It was not limited by some idea of me and it. And, whether I ever have any other experience like that, I will spend the rest of my life discovering what that points to. And, that's what's trustworthy.

[23:18] HILLARY: I wonder, Gangaji, if after you had your awakening with Papaji, if you ever had moments where you even had to consider trust again?

[23:28] GANGAJI: Oh, yes, yes. You know, I have a mind that works. I have thoughts. But, I had had such a profound experience that there was a flip between what is foreground and what is background. And, I said yes to that profound experience. So, that my thoughts were no longer in the foreground, they were in the background and they were the function of my mind. I have thoughts. I have a personality and this mind-body is made in a particular way. I may not be made to doubt, but I have my own issues that go with this mind-body. But, deeper than that is what is trustworthy. My tendencies are not trustworthy. My valuations are not trustworthy. My summations are not trustworthy. But, what holds all of that, the consciousness of the truth that I am is absolutely trustworthy, and that's the possibility for everyone listening to open to that, to discover that, and to be true to that.

[24:43] HILLARY: Every time we end a conversation, Gangaji, I'll have to say that I feel awkward because there's really nothing left to say when you get done.

[24:53] GANGAJI: That's right. Then the issue is resolved.

[24:55] HILLARY: Yeah, it's beautiful and I really also want to acknowledge to people, all the people that wrote in and the conversations that were happening on Facebook. I know I speak on behalf of both of us that the participation is really what we're looking for in this program. And, I'm just really, just so thrilled with how people are writing in and sharing their thoughts with you.

[25:19] GANGAJI: Me too. Really, really happy.

[25:21] HILLARY: All right, well, then I guess we will catch up next time.

[25:24] GANGAJI: Great, thank you. Wonderful, Hillary, thank you.

[25:36] HILLARY: I want to wrap up our conversation today on trust from this clip from Gangaji. It's actually from a CD titled Innocence, Trust and Self-Betrayal.

(clip)

[25:48] GANGAJI: There's this fear that you are essentially untrustworthy. And, the truth is who you think you are IS essentially untrustworthy. But, the peace itself, this is absolutely trustworthy. The spaciousness that is consciousness is absolutely completely trustworthy. Thoughts of who you are and feelings of who you are, and conclusions of who you are appear and change and disappear. That's the law of this planet. They are eaten by other thoughts just as they eat the previous thoughts and feelings and states. You are changeless peace. So, to trust yourself is not to trust your image of yourself or your thought of yourself. It's to trust the truth of yourself which cannot be thought. And so, now if you're thinking yourself as peace, drop that thought. That's not peace. That's a thought of peace. So, it's this before beginning-ness, this immediacy that is right here, always right here, right now, never in the past, and never in the future.

(end clip)

[27:21] HILLARY: I have one more thing from Gangaji for you today, so stick around for that. But first, I want to let you know that if you have a question or a comment for Gangaji, please write to gangajiradio@gangaji.org. That's g-a-n-g-a-j-i-radio@gangaji.org. And please check out our website gangaji.org. If you'd like to join Gangaji for a live monthly webcast, just look for With Gangaji. See how you can sign up for that. Also, you can get more information about this show, Gangaji's event schedule and lots of other things by going to Facebook and searching for Gangaji Community. We so much appreciate you sharing this podcast with others through the Gangaji website, Vividlife.me and Facebook. And, if you'd like, you can rate this show or leave a comment by going to iTunes. Just search for *A Conversation with Gangaji*. Well, there's an incredibly talented musician. Her name is Jami Sieber. You can find her at Jamisieber.com, and she donated the music you're listening to right now. And, with that I'll leave you with one last clip from Gangaji. This is from *The Diamond in Your Pocket*. Thank you so much for joining us again this month. Be well. Until next time.

(clip)

[28:43] GANGAJI: The search is over when you realize that the true and lasting fulfillment you have been searching for is found to be nowhere other than right where you are. It is here. It is in you. It is in me. It is in all life, both sentient and insentient. It is everywhere, as long as you are searching for it. It cannot be found because you assume that IT is someplace else. You are continually chasing a lie. The truth of who you are is utterly simple. It is closer than your thoughts, closer than your heartbeat, closer than your breath. If you believe your thoughts to be real, if you follow your thoughts as the basis of reality, you will continually overlook what is closer, what has been calling you throughout time saying "You are here. You are home. Come in. Be at home."