

[Being Yourself Podcast with Gangaji](#)

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Episode 2: Yes, Hope Can Be a Curse

Our magical thinking cannot change the universe, it's really all about trying to change something in ourselves that is waiting to be faced.

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*Hello and welcome to being yourself, self-enquiry with Gangaji. My name is Barbara Denempont and it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this 2<sup>nd</sup> episode of our new podcast.*

*This month I was inspired by something I heard Gangaji say over twenty years ago, something that never left me, she was speaking to a man who, who said he felt hopelessly lost and confused and desperate. What Gangaji told him was when you're at the end of your rope throw the rope away. I never forgot those words, because she was saying something that was so radical so different than anything else than I had ever heard what she was really saying was give up hope, stop hoping, now I had never considered that and I am sure you may have never considered that, but it was a powerful moment and so I went into the archives and I found this wonderful sharing that was recorded in 2011 at the Omega institute and in it Gangaji shares her story of meeting hopelessness, and it's a very personal story, so I invite you to take a listen.*

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Hope is one of these words like God and Truth and Self and Love that is a small word for a very many different meanings and, when hope is simple like hope you have a good day, hope you have a good journey, hope you get well hope I get well, it, it's light, there's a, it's like a blessing and its beautiful, but when it becomes a strategy of avoidance, it is life choking. It actually becomes counterproductive to, to a blessing it becomes a curse.

So hope is very appropriate for children you know, it's a future. I will just tell you a brief story from my life story.

When I was 5 years old I had a very severe burn, on my hand and it required operations and then operations on top of operations and it was painful and traumatic but then there was this horrible scar with keloids and all kinds of things, and deformed nails, and everyone, burns are ugly. And when they heal they are often ugly in the sense of the way we see beauty. I had this wonderful Grandmother who kept telling me when your 11 years old the doctors said it will be gone, the scar will be gone, she certainly believed that as well as hoped that was true, because this was like this mark on this little child you know and so when I was Eleven years old I figured I could hold out until then, I was five years old and you know I hid it I got all kinds of strategies and perhaps more importantly it became a reflection to me of what was deeply scared and ugly inside myself, some accident that had happened, I didn't know what but I started hoping.

It's going to be so great at eleven years old it's going to be gone, by the time I was 10 and it hadn't gone anyway, I couldn't imagine how it could just go away when I was 11, I mean I was smart enough

to know that that is actually impossible for something just to disappear overnight but I had this magical thinking about hope you know if I hope it does and they said it would and it's supposed to when I'm 11 years old it's going to go away, and of course it didn't when I was 11 years old and amazingly even though I was, well I knew that was going to happen I was shocked and I felt betrayed, it didn't go away, it's with me, and I would see people flinch from it as I grew older and you know in the courting stages and men are looking to see are perfect and so my teeth weren't perfect but 'Oh my God what is that' and you know I was, I would just hide it, of course this is small I have talked to people who were born missing an arm and she went through a much bigger version of this but this is a small one.

It is shocking to me when I look back how many decades were spent hiding and hoping that somehow this would be removed from me and more importantly what it was a reflection of this that was flawed and ugly inside me would be removed, and so in that case hope was really a detriment to my finally just recognising this is the way this hand is, now let's get on with the way life is.

I wasn't thinking of it every moment but I gave it too much thought, it became too important and in a similar way I had hoped that if I got enlightened I wouldn't have any pains there would be this sweeping clear of all my flaws, I wouldn't care how I looked, I wouldn't care what people thought of me, I would just be in bliss and everybody would be in bliss with me and everybody would live happily ever after, that's what hope is a happily ever after.

And it's, it's detrimental, used that way, it's it takes a chunk out of one's life. I also hoped that my mother would stop drinking, she didn't, I hoped that you know we hoped that the sun would come out, but if the sun needs to come out we hope it comes out and we are miserable when it doesn't come out then hope is a detriment to just appreciate that, our magical thinking cannot change the universe, it's really all about trying to change something in ourselves that is waiting to be faced.

At a certain point in my life I had to face my own internal sense of ugliness and flawed-ness and worthlessness all of my movement my indulgence in perfecting myself or seducing others to see that I am actually perfect, I am good I am worthy, was just a covering some sense that I knew myself to be unworthy unlovable, scarred ugly, marred for life, with no hope but then the hope that I could that you wouldn't see that, so I was a hopeless hope dichotomy then at play with itself, in the core it felt hopelessness and miserable but I couldn't go there so I just hoped you wouldn't see it and its exhausting its work and it doesn't work, because what your covering then is somehow also what your transmitting and it is ugly then, it becomes a part of your persona.

So at some point in my life through meditation and actually before I met Papaji that I can see now is some kind of preparation for being able to hear him for having the space in my mind to hear him, I, I recognised I had to open, I had to meet this ugliness, because it would come up in meditation it would come up in the middle of the night come up at 4am, come up when I was stressed, so by the Grace of our common intelligence I actually opened to it and it was in a meditation and I felt it and so it wasn't about the scar at that point but it was about some dark really scary bad energy and I felt like if I met it, this was the conversation in my head I would go insane or I would be lost to it, I would just be one of these women you read about in romantic novels, you know that are just gone, lost but there I was in mediation and I was in my early 30's at that point and so I had really, I had tried so many strategies and this had always come back to haunt me, that somehow there was that willingness in that moment to simply to open to it with no hope of it changing with no hope that opening to it would make it go away, just to open to it to not do anything with it and it was like a cloud, a very dark cloud of energy, and then in the instant of opening to it, it wasn't. Less than an instant, I mean an immeasurable nano moment it was not. Then to me this was magical so I hoped it would never come back. And the truth is it never did come back like it was because it had been

decades of compressing it into that but it came back in other little ways, someone was unfriendly to me someone didn't like me and it would trigger this old pattern, just like my scar is still here, its maybe not as noticeable as my skin has aged but it didn't go away and that internal scar that the track of it didn't go away. But it all of a sudden shifted from being an enemy from being something I have to hide myself from and hide from others to a, a meditation. An invitation, an opportunity to actually open.

I didn't choose to open every time somebody could not like me and I could just go 'What did I do, I could have been better' and then all of a sudden you start to hear yourself 'well this is so familiar, how many times have I said this, I should have been better, I should have done it right, I should have given them what they wanted' Oh, there's a lack there, there's a hole there, there's an abyss there. There is the hopelessness of ever doing it right, getting it right, there's a hopelessness of death there's a hopelessness of imperfection, a hopelessness of what we cannot change and in the willingness to give up the hope that you can control or fix or manage that, just for a moment, just for a moment to open to it, and you can't force that opening because if your forcing it its really your forcing the opening so that you can get rid of that ugliness that darkness that cloud, that energy, so it's not like an exorcism, it's a willingness for everything to be exactly as it is, at least in this moment.

It also doesn't mean that you then don't work to make things right if there had been an operation that could fix this scar I would have had it, I took magic substances to fix this internal scar and that felt great but it didn't last.

So I'm just encouraging you, to let you know that I really am no different from you in the sense of my capabilities. I was not a great meditator, I had to set the timer for my meditation and I would look you know, shake it 'it must be broken' but there was something in there that appeared in some moment in my life that I can't even really remember, maybe it was when I fell in love with Jesus as a six year old, I have no idea, but something that was a recognition that there is a huge life available, and in my infantile thinking I hoped that I could just fix what was wrong with me then I could get to that huge life, that life of peace and beauty and love and ease and fulfilment so like all of us I went down so many wrong roads, and sometimes the waves would part and I would think 'wow my magical thinking does work' because sometimes the waves do part, Grace appears, and beautiful waves and intention is beautiful and hoping is beautiful but when it becomes a strategy of avoidance, and of avoidance of what is like got you, then it is a detriment and my encouragement is to for a moment for this day we have together, tomorrow, tonight give up hope, for anything being different, anything, externally or internally, in particular internally cause that's where the real charge is. Just give up hope I am not saying dramatize giving up hope because that's really also a kind of magical theatre, to like if I can dramatize it, it won't get any worse, just give up hope and discover what's here.

I believe that hope and faith get used in the same way and they are actually very different, faith comes from some deep profound experience and hope is some hoped for experience in the future. You give up hope that anything has to change about you, any state has to not be here, then so much energy is available to actually meet what is here and it's not about when I get something then that will be fixed, when I get enlightened, when I get the perfect mate, when I get the perfect job, if I stop my job if I switch mates, if I if the sun comes out, then that's not then confused with pleasure the pleasure and the necessity maybe of switching mates of changing jobs the sun coming out is definitely a necessity but it's not confused with the fulfilment that's always here your open heart.

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*Thank you for listening to being yourself we always welcome your reports and topic suggestions. You can write to me [barb@info@gangaji.org](mailto:barb@info@gangaji.org) and looking ahead on January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> The California Institute of integral studies is hosting a weekend with Gangaji in San Francisco the focus for the weekend is 'Discovering natural fulfilment' you can learn more about Gangaji, her complete schedule of events online or in person and you can find out more about the work of her foundation on the website [Gangaji.org](http://Gangaji.org).*

*I'm very grateful for this opportunity to bring this vast archive to you, this is Barbara Denempont until next time.*

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