

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 47
Host Barbara Denempont
The Problem is Not the Problem
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GANGAJI: But just for the purposes of investigation, for discovering a “why” and a “how” that has not been discovered. Let’s go together where you don’t want to go.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. I feel a little subdued today I think as I have been reflecting on this particular clip that I’m going to share with you today, it’s actually quite funny but also quite deep, quite, quite serious, all at the same time. Gangaji has often shared this invitation to stop fixing yourself and I told her even recently that that’s the most radical thing I’ve ever heard – such a radical invitation and it’s such an important one. And as we face so much that needs to be fixed, or at least we feel has to be fixed, it’s really an important moment in any of our lives to take that instant to stop, to be still and to meet whatever is arising. It has a consequence of course for our own lives, but as this piece also demonstrates, it touches much more than just our own lives.

(Excerpted from San Rafael, CA, A Meeting with Gangaji, August 19, 2001)

PARTICIPANT: I work with people with mental health problems and....

GANGAJI: You work with people with mental health problems, yes.

PARTICIPANT: And um

GANGAJI: And you have some yourself?

PARTICIPANT: Well....

GANGAJI: Oh, certainly not. That is alright, everyone here does too.

PARTICIPANT: But um....

GANGAJI: Yes, he will take care of this. You relax. You relax. Look here, stay here.

PARTICIPANT: Well, you know that they, most of my clients they are in the victim role and they are very self-destructive.

GANGAJI: Yes, yes, is that familiar? Just take a moment. That is a mental health problem, isn’t it?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah, and it makes me sad.

GANGAJI: Yes.

PARTICIPANT: If I see people destroy their opportunities, it makes me sad.

GANGAJI: Yes, so you become victimized by their victim story

PARTICIPANT: That's correct. I want them to do good for themselves

GANGAJI: Yes. You want them, so they will stop bothering you with their victim story.

(Laughter.) I know what you mean, I wish you would wake up so I could take a walk.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: I want them to be happy.

GANGAJI: Yes. "Be happy, damn it! You are bringing me down again." I can relate to your story. I can relate to it. It is an edge, isn't it? It is an edge to work with people who are suffering greatly.

PARTICIPANT: Who want to suffer, it's like they keep, they hold onto it.

GANGAJI: Yes, who want to suffer, and you don't want to suffer. And yet, so how is it you suffering?

PARTICIPANT: I don't get it, why do they do that?

GANGAJI: I am pointing to how it is they do it.

PARTICIPANT: Why do they do this?

GANGAJI: They do it exactly the same reason you do it to yourself.

PARTICIPANT: Well, I mean, I am usually trying to be happy.

GANGAJI: But not right now. Well same thing, they are trying to be happy. They are trying to be happy, very desperately. So how is it, though, I am quite serious in this, how is it their suffering makes you unhappy? What is it you have to do with their suffering to make yourself unhappy with it?

PARTICIPANT: Um, well it is their suffering I suppose.

GANGAJI: Well, that is true, that is fine, we know that. But there is something that happens that makes it your suffering. And I just want to know what that is, because then you will have a real clue as to what their, the dynamic that they try to be happy and can't be happy, how that operates.

PARTICIPANT: Maybe letting go of the sense to be responsible for their happiness.

GANGAJI: No, no, this is, now you are looking for a solution. I am asking you to look and see what is the mechanism. What is the mechanism in your thought process? What is the moment where their suffering makes you unhappy? I am not saying it is a bad thing. I don't think it is a bad thing. So I am not saying it is something you should correct. I think it is actually quite useful, then you get to experience unhappiness and that actually, your heart can break even wider. So I am not saying correct this. But your question to me was, "Why is it they do this? How is it they do this?" And the answer to that is found in how and why you do this.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: So are you aware of some story that you tell yourself about.... Take a particular client in your mind that after you have been with, you are sad because they won't get off it or they won't stop suffering. What do you tell yourself?

PARTICIPANT: Well, I tell myself this is an intelligent person and they ought to not, this is a, tries to be spiritual, reads literature, so they ought to know they are God, and live as if they were.

GANGAJI: That is right.

PARTICIPANT: And why, how come they can't translate what they know into their actions?

GANGAJI: So now we are speaking of the paradox. This has brought exactly, exactly the point of our meeting today. This is an intelligent being, who has had experiences of God, spiritual experiences, and yet still they continue to be unhappy and to suffer. They can see what they do, they can see the consequences of what they do. So we are not speaking of someone who can't see that.

PARTICIPANT: No, I am talking about intelligent people.

GANGAJI: Yes, good, I am happy you are, because that is where the paradox is.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: So if you don't fix this paradox in yourself, or in them, just for a moment. I love that your work is to fix it. But just for this moment, you don't fix it with philosophy and you don't fix it with religion. You don't fix it with what they should be doing, you don't fix it with what they are doing. You just meet the paradox: here is intelligence and gross ignorance. Because you are speaking of ignorance.

PARTICIPANT: Yes.

GANGAJI: How is it that the two coexist?

PARTICIPANT: I don't know.

GANGAJI: That is the beginning. And in that saying, "I don't know," is there an energy that you feel or an emotion?

PARTICIPANT: I don't want to say sadness

GANGAJI: But there is. There is sadness there, I can see it. Yes, there is nothing wrong with that. What is wrong with sadness? You see, in our simplistic view of spirituality we keep sadness out. But what if you, you invite this sadness that is there in, closer? What if you meet this sadness with your full being, with your full intelligence? Not with spiritual or psychological or philosophical shields, but just directly.

PARTICIPANT: I get um like a slide downward, slide.

GANGAJI: Yes, so let's go down, we go together.

PARTICIPANT: Okay.

GANGAJI: It is a drop in something deeper even than sadness.

PARTICIPANT: I don't, I don't want to.

GANGAJI: I know. I understand that. But just for the purposes of investigation, for discovering a "why" and a "how" that has not been discovered. Let's go together where you don't want to go. What are you experiencing?

PARTICIPANT: Like, like hopelessness.

GANGAJI: Yes, that is right. That is deeper even than sadness. So let us go into hopelessness, just as you went into sadness. Not keeping it out because it is not spiritual, it is not intelligent, it is not psychologically hip, but just to meet it. Not indulging it with some story, but meeting it with your intelligence.

PARTICIPANT: It feels like dissolving of everything. Everything is dissolving and there's no more form.

GANGAJI: Yes, let it go, just for our purposes. Let it all go. In this experience of dissolution, which is different from a theory of dissolution, in the direct experience.

PARTICIPANT: Actually, for me that is okay.

GANGAJI: It feels all right, doesn't it?

PARTICIPANT: For me it does.

GANGAJI: For everyone.

PARTICIPANT: It is like, well, who cares, really.

GANGAJI: Really, but not a casual “who cares”, it is really.

PARTICIPANT: No, it is like...

GANGAJI: It is a beautiful experience.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, absolutely.

GANGAJI: It is an experience of joy, and that....

PARTICIPANT: Yes, yes, it is the opposite of control.

GANGAJI: Yes. So you have clearly experienced that in other realms.

PARTICIPANT: Oh yes.

GANGAJI: But in this realm of like being with your clients, or being with aspects of yourself, without the shield of either substance or practice or mantra or amulet or ritual, without the shield of that. And there is nothing wrong with any of that, it all has its place, it is all beautiful, it all serves, but in a moment of just nakedly meeting what has not been met, then there is another opportunity for dissolution.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, it is not bad.

GANGAJI: At the very least, it is not bad. And in the beginning of not wanting to go there, there is a sense of, “It’s bad.” Yes, that is right. That is right, “I don’t want to go there.” That is right. So we go together. In a moment, what you have resisted, even without knowing it, or resisted in others, as you were speaking in your clients, their suffering, their sadness. If there is resistance to it, doesn’t matter if it is in them or if it is in you. It is really all the same. There is a possibility to meet it in a deeper, conscious, naked way that has nothing as the cause of dissolution, other than the meeting. I used to love to do acid, when in the seventies.

PARTICIPANT: Me too.

GANGAJI: You look like it. I am sort of, you know, kind of past here. Well, I only did it four or five times, but it was incredible, and I was telling somebody the other day, there were lots of incredible aspects to it. But the most incredible, the most lasting, incredible, useful aspect was, that if I struggled against it, as it started to come on. It is like, “Omigod, I forgot. This is big. I shouldn’t have done this. This was a mistake, not today. It is the wrong setting.” You know, I was in hell, and it got worse and worse and worse. In a moment of, “Okay, it happened. It is here. It is in the system, and it will last as long as it lasts. I am here with it.” Ah, there is bliss. Better than not bad, there is clarity, there is seeing, because surrender has occurred. When my everything was to say, “No!” In a moment it is like, “Well, okay.” So if you have never done acid, it is like having a baby. I have also told this story, when I had my first baby, you know, I was twenty-five years old, but I was a really young twenty-five year old. And I was having my pregnancy and everything was fine, then it came time to have the baby and I had labor pains. It was like, “What? This is really big. This is huge, and this is impossible.” And I had no idea it would hurt like this, not a clue that it would hurt like this.

And I made a mistake and I would like to get out of it. I mean, I actually had that thought. You know, I mean it came up, "This is a mistake! Wait a minute." But there is also with the stupidity, there is some intelligence, so it is like, "You can't get out of it. It is too late, you made the mistake nine months ago." So, there was a, you can surrender. Like, you can surrender. In those days, it was surrender to the drugs that they guarantee you can't feel anything. But before the drugs came on, there was a moment of just, "Okay, it is here. I'll meet it." And in that it doesn't mean there is not pain, it doesn't mean that you don't have to see something that you didn't want to see, and what you see is painful. It can be intensely painful. But the paradox is, in the seeing of it, without it going away, without it needing to go away, it goes away. And with it needing to go away, it stays.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, gotcha.

GANGAJI: Yes you do, you do.

PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

GANGAJI: Thank you.

It was so beautiful, actually what occurred up here. Really beautiful. You are not sad anymore and that is beautiful, there is sadness itself, the meeting of the sadness itself that revealed this. So, in our feeling "not sad" we think, usually, "Oh good, sadness is gone, I hope it doesn't come back. Because it was sadness that was the problem." Sadness is not the problem. The paradox is not the problem. (Chuckles.) That is a good one. The paradox is not the problem. We could make a bumper sticker out of that. Don't though, please. The problem is not the problem. Just a relationship, creates the problem. It is a relationship of grasping or rejecting, very basic. And we are programmed very basically, to grasp and reject. That is part of the program. The invitation is to not bend in either direction for one instant, and then not bend in either direction that is revealed in that one instant. Then grasping and rejecting also are not a problem. This will never be figured out logically, ever. Although if you do, you let me know. It is possible.

BARBARA: What a true opportunity this is to meet what is arising without moving, without avoiding. What a gift. It reveals what really has no need of fixing and has no need of hope. What's already whole and complete, that is this invitation and I hope this podcast supports you in that discovery and I hope you can make good use of everything that's offered on the Gangaji website gangaji.org, that's gangaji.org. And of course, we'd love to welcome you to Gangaji's monthly meetings. This is all here in support of that discovery and I just, I just feel so grateful.

Thank you for listening. This is Barbara Denempont.

Until next time.