

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 49
Host Barbara Denempont
Do You Really Need to Be Special?
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GANGAJI: Does specialness really deliver for you? Certainly, you can feel elated for a moment of feeling special, but does it last? Do you, can you feel special in all circumstances?

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: Then you haven't discovered what is always here.

BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. The title of today's podcast really speaks to what the clip is all about of course: Do you really need to be special? Well it's a great question because there are a lot of perks to being special of course, we know that. But there's also a much darker side to it and I love how this clip really illuminates what that means, not only in our own lives, but what that could mean in the world.

(Excerpted from Fallen Leaf Lake Silent Retreat, CA, May 25, 2022)

PARTICIPANT: I'm having trouble with three words here. I'm having trouble with 'ordinary', 'special'. Those just piss the hell out of me.

GANGAJI: Both of them?

PARTICIPANT: Both of them.

GANGAJI: Both extremes.

PARTICIPANT: Extremes. I can deal with the anger. I haven't got to all the stuff underneath yet – the not-enough-ness – but this word of humility?

GANGAJI: Humility. What would that involve? What's the risk there?

PARTICIPANT: I have no idea what it really means.

GANGAJI: Well something's ...

PARTICIPANT: I'm all upset.

GANGAJI: (Gangaji laughs) So, when we're upset, yeah, I don't know if it's anger or some kind of energy like that, thrusting energy, it's usually something pretty close to the surface underneath that. Because, even though that's our biggest emotion, it's not our deepest.

PARTICIPANT: And I understand.

GANGAJI: You didn't understand?

PARTICIPANT: If I sit, when I sit with anger it can go to not worthy enough ...

GANGAJI: No, no, okay great.

PARTICIPANT: All that stuff

GANGAJI: But here's the thing. When you say, "When I sit with anger," it takes this long, right. You don't, you're sitting now, but you don't have to sit with anger. You just, "Oh anger!" What's underneath anger? What have you found is underneath anger when you sit with it, when you look at it, when you inquire into it – in the past?

PARTICIPANT: Sadness.

GANGAJI: Sadness. Fear.

PARTICIPANT: Grief

GANGAJI: Grief.

PARTICIPANT: Fear. Self-doubt.

GANGAJI: Yes, so those are the issues. It's not humility that's the issue or, "I can handle these, but I can't handle these." This is where the juice is in your self-inquiry of your particular human form.

PARTICIPANT: But I don't even know what the feeling of humility feels like.

GANGAJI: Why do you need to know?

PARTICIPANT: Because we talk about it.

GANGAJI: Have I, have I said "humility?"

PARTICIPANT: Maybe "humble."

GANGAJI: I don't talk about being humble.

PARTICIPANT: Oh, okay. Maybe I've just like..

GANGAJI: That's a gift you have to deserve. You can't talk about that. That comes. I did mention that I thought I wanted to be special, that that would give me what I wanted and I was shocked, and humbled maybe, to realize that's not it at all. It's absolutely ordinariness that gives everything. What do you say about that?

(Audience laughs)

PARTICIPANT: Well, you know that ordinariness now. I've got to be honest with you. Ordinary. I don't want to be ordinary. I've never been ordinary.

GANGAJI: That's the problem. You are ordinary though, and so, yes we know you are extraordinary as every human being is extraordinary in their own right, as every snowflake is, as every molecule is, that's the truth. But, as a form, you are ordinary. A human being. An ordinary human being. How many billions have there been? You're one of many. So, to let that in, you really have to recognize what stops, stops you from letting that in, what the

danger is in being ordinary. It's something to do with survival, that's why we want to be extraordinary.

PARTICIPANT: Death.

GANGAJI: Death. Oh, death again.

PARTICIPANT: I'll die if I'm ordinary.

GANGAJI: That's right, you will.

PARTICIPANT: I'll die. I'm going to get depressed. I'll going to be boring. I'm going to sit and eat chocolate.

GANGAJI: But aren't you bored with all of that?

PARTICIPANT: Bored with?

GANGAJI: All of the, "I'm not going to be ordinary. I'm going to be special. I'm going to .." Isn't that boring finally? How long have you been playing that tape? "I'm not going to be ordinary. I'm going to be.. I'm not ordinary. I'm special."

PARTICIPANT: Well now, I don't go around thinking, "I'm special."

GANGAJI: No, certainly.

PARTICIPANT: Now, I do have to watch sometimes fantasy of wanting to be special and I catch it.

GANGAJI: So, what will it give if you're special in that fantasy?

PARTICIPANT: I get to be like you.

GANGAJI: You want to trade seats and see how you feel?

PARTICIPANT: I would love to!

GANGAJI: Okay, so turn and speak to them.

PARTICIPANT: Who would like to come up now? Okay.

(Laughter and clapping)

GANGAJI: (Gangaji sings) Help me I'm falling.

PARTICIPANT: That's wonderful!

GANGAJI: That's easy for you to say, you're so extraordinary!

PARTICIPANT: Well, I'm not extraordinary then, I'm just..

GANGAJI: Oh, you are! You are!

PARTICIPANT: But that doesn't feel good either.

GANGAJI: Interesting, huh?

PARTICIPANT: Yeah.

GANGAJI: Well, there's something that's deeper than ordinary or extraordinary. There's something that's more precious. And really, the reason I used ordinary is just because it was just a counterbalance to my thought that extra-ordinariness is what gave you happiness or peace because I was conditioned that way. I was brought up in a Southern household and so all women had to be extraordinary to get the right man.

PARTICIPANT: Oh yeah.

GANGAJI: And you get the right man that means you survive for a little while. You get a protector, a provider. So, it's always all about survival if you just unwind it a little bit, whatever your conditioning. Where were you brought up?

PARTICIPANT: Ashville, North Carolina. I was bred to be. I was bred, I wasn't raised. So, I get it.

GANGAJI: Yeah. That's right. Yeah, you do, you get it and it's a burden. Really. It's maybe a golden burden because you succeeded. You became extraordinary. But did that give you what you really, truly, finally want from this lifetime?

PARTICIPANT: Well, what comes from that then is wanting more.

GANGAJI: Wanting more extraordinariness?

PARTICIPANT: More extraordinary.

GANGAJI: Yeah, that's, I was reading, I saw this wonderful (excuse me this little digression), this wonderful, horrible little spot about Putin, about how Putin got to be this megalomaniac that he is. I mean, we could see Trump or we could see any number of people - we have many examples of that. But this, this was a neuroscientist talking about it and it said, really when he was just in the KGB, he was just, just a cog in the machine. It was fine and that's why Yeltsin picked him to be the president. He thought he could be controllable. But what happens when you get picked, as you have been picked, you have been selected, something happens in your brain like with any addiction like with a sweet addiction when, woah, that feels good. I would like some more of that. And really, it's a neuro circuit that happens that actually grows in wanting more and so, he found out how a politician or a president of a country gets more. And you found out the way you've been bred and the way you have practiced, what gets you more. But, is more, up to this point anyway, ever been enough? Has more ever been enough beyond the five minutes of pleasure that you get when you recognize you're more.

PARTICIPANT: No, because you know, everything I have done in my life, if you look at it on paper, it could, maybe you might, I don't know, some people might think, "Well, that's extraordinary!" But I can't feel it.

GANGAJI: Yes, that's right. Of course. This is so good. I'm happy. So, your brain is not corrupted by it because you're getting the correct signals: this is empty. Maybe you're happy with your accomplishments but this is empty. It doesn't give me the truth of myself. It doesn't reveal true happiness. This is a very good sign.

PARTICIPANT: That I can't feel it?

GANGAJI: That you don't feel happy from being extraordinary. Because, if you did, you wouldn't be in this room. You'd just be out working to get more extraordinary. Whatever it takes. It is like an addiction. It's not like an addiction – it is an addiction.

PARTICIPANT: So, let's say that you come off, you come out, I don't know you, I say, let's say I come out of a beautiful session or a wonderful workshop or something and I really feel good.

GANGAJI: Yeah.

PARTICIPANT: It feels good.

GANGAJI: It does, yes. It's beautiful.

PARTICIPANT: Beautiful.

GANGAJI: And then what? What do you pick up?

PARTICIPANT: It feels good. Next

GANGAJI: Yeah, what do you pick up? What happens next? That's the key.

PARTICIPANT: Well, it's not to be addicted to that, but it's, "Oh my, isn't this nice," but the next minute, somebody could be calling and makes me cry or makes me angry.

GANGAJI: So, where did the nice feeling go? That's the source of addictions.

PARTICIPANT: It just dissolved.

GANGAJI: You just have to find another nice feeling. What if, so what if the next client is a failure, the next session is no good?

PARTICIPANT: Well, then I have to feel, I feel the feelings. I have to..

GANGAJI: But what is the narrative? The feelings are the feelings, but what is the narrative because that's where the prison is. That's where the slavery is.

PARTICIPANT: Okay, I understand the feelings.

GANGAJI: The feelings are the feelings. You feel elated, you feel depressed.

PARTICIPANT: What's the story?

GANGAJI: What's the narrative? What's the story? What are you telling yourself about yourself or about other?

PARTICIPANT: Maybe.

GANGAJI: Maybe what?

PARTICIPANT: That if I'm feeling the feelings like I've been doing and that – maybe I think that makes me special.

GANGAJI: Well, is that, is that the story?

PARTICIPANT: Because I feel I can feel things.

GANGAJI: You can feel everything.

PARTICIPANT: So, maybe there's a story there.

GANGAJI: There either is or there isn't, but if you examine it and there is, then that narrative is part of something that keeps you chasing something that never has given you lasting fulfillment – pleasure certainly – but lasting fulfillment – and it never will.

PARTICIPANT: I think this maybe it - because I can feel the feelings.

GANGAJI: You're special.

PARTICIPANT: I'm special and so therefore I should be you because I can feel the feelings.

GANGAJI: But I've just said that I'm not special, so you'd better stay you if you want to be special.

PARTICIPANT: Okay. Yeah. This specialness is going to take some work, yeah. Maybe not.

GANGAJI: Well, you have to be motivated. You have to be motivated and that's from telling the truth. Does specialness really deliver for you? Certainly, you can feel elated for a moment of feeling special, but does it last? Do you, can you feel special in all circumstances?

PARTICIPANT: No.

GANGAJI: Then you haven't discovered what is always here. And that's the invitation. Then it's really, it's of course much deeper than ordinary or specialness. It has nothing to do with either one. Both appear and disappear in that. Inflation – specialness. Deflation – less than ordinary.

PARTICIPANT: Mhm. That I see.

GANGAJI: That's beautiful.

PARTICIPANT: It has nothing to do with any of it.

GANGAJI: That's right. That's right. You see, the whole room feels it. It's a dropping from this, from a narrative about other and about yourself and ranking and where pleasure is, where satisfaction is, where extraordinariness is. You can see how these words are so useless really because there are special moments and there are ordinary moments. But if you're banking on the special moments, you're banking on the fewer moments of life. There are many more ordinary moments – many, many, many more. And they're extraordinary just in their beingness. When we have to have it be a certain way like bliss. So, you've experienced bliss and you want to wake up because you hear that's where more bliss is – that's where I'll go buy more bliss because I like that the best. But then you have to toss this word "bliss" out of the way because then it's not bliss, it's some object of your fantasy that's going to give you what's already here. And that's humbling but it's not humiliating. It's restful because you aren't striving, you aren't trying to get the next hit or the next proof, the next success. Everybody likes success. It doesn't mean success is not likeable but you know, it's not defining you.

So it's what I meant when I said I am ordinary, you know. I understand I'm on stage, I'm Gangaji. I'm bringing to you Papaji's words and I have the gift of gab. So, so I get, you know, the set up there and I think it's very useful if you think I'm extraordinary for whatever period of time – until you get to know me better. But it's really not useful for me to consider myself that. That would, that's megalomania and it's just not true. And we see a lot of people, this documentary I saw about Putin was really showing how he physiologically went that way – as we do when we're addicted, I mean, it's a physiological thing. It's a big thing. And we are addicted to our definitions of ourself as either wonderful or horrible depending on what we like, bliss or some kind of masochistic torture. But none of that can exist without a narrative associated with it.

So, this simple instruction or invitation to just be aware of a narrative, overhear the narrative, and for a few moments just to recognize that you can stop following the narrative. End of story. Then, there is this freshness of being. It's been here all along, but the narrative is the distraction from that. You have been here all along – the same innocence you had as a child is still here. It didn't get bred out of you. The same wonder, you know, same irritability, same infantile-ness, same whatever – all the other aspects of your personality. But at the core there's this ageless being that is you. And since it is you, you don't have to do anything to accomplish it. You have to be willing to not do anything for at least a moment – at least an inquiry. So you discover what is here.

Then, of course, if you own that and you get inflated with that, you know, that will be the normal state of affairs then. You will become a megalomaniac and people will be hurt in your wake and.. But we have had plenty of those who have gone before us in all areas of life: politicians, spiritual teachers, successful people who have been eaten up by their megalomania. We don't need to go there. They have fallen in these deep holes that we can see. So, you can be aware when you start going inflated with it and you just come back to this, no narrative, no-body, no enlightenment, no un-enlightenment. What is here?

BARBARA: What a fresh and honest dialogue. I think it's such a relevant topic. I think we can all relate to it. So, I hope it serves you today and if this program does support you, if this podcast supports you, I hope you support us as well. Your contributions are really meaningful and really help to make this whole program possible, along with many others.

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Thank you for listening. My name is Barbara Denempont.

Until next time.