

Gangaji Podcast
Being Yourself
Episode 62
Host Barbara Denempont
The Yoga of Naturally Being Yourself
Released September 18, 2023
www.gangaji.org

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BARBARA DENEMPONT, HOST: Hello and welcome to *Being Yourself, Self-Inquiry with Gangaji*. My name is Barbara Denempont. I don't know if you ever felt this way but, when I was younger, I just wanted to be normal and I worked hard to be normal in many ways, and I actually achieved a fair amount of normalcy in my life and what might even be called success. But there came a moment when I had to tell the hard truth to myself: I wasn't happy. I was actually miserable and suffering. And in that moment, when I was absolutely honest with myself, it opened up this possibility for me to simply be true to myself.

And coming to that fork in the road can be a scary moment. It was for me because everything was about to change. And I am confident that most everybody listening can relate to that story so when I came across this recording from Maui in 1995, I knew I had to share it. Gangaji begins this meeting speaking about the difference between "normal" and "natural" and then shares one of those fork-in-the-road moments in her life when everything should have been just great, but it wasn't.

(Excerpted from A Meeting with Gangaji, July 15, 1995, Boulder, CO)

GANGAJI: How come you all are so far away? This is like this rug, this kind of moat? I like you close you know, not so you have to strain your neck but just closer. (Sound of people moving). Isn't that better? It's more natural, isn't it? It's natural. This what I am speaking of is natural - the yoga of being natural - not normal. Please never ever mistake the word natural, the state of naturalness, for normalness. Normalness, normality is conditioned response. Also, nothing wrong with that. I am not speaking against normality. But to be natural is to be free of that which is normal. Yes. You can look very normal, you can act very normal, you can speak very normally, you can live very normally, and every instant recognize you are eternally free from that. What's normal is to live normally or abnormally and be bound by that. You know there are, we are all somehow part of this sixties generation that really rebelled against normality and we had to discover in that rebellion that that too is bondage.

So, it's really to discover this that is natural that has nothing to do with compliance or rebellion. And in that then, compliance when it is appropriate, is natural. And when rebellion is appropriate, it too is natural. But not as some form. Okay, Claudia.

PARTICIPANT: What's coming up for me is that I want nothing.

GANGAJI: Oh, very lucky!

PARTICIPANT: That I have always wanted nothing.

GANGAJI: Yes!

PARTICIPANT: And when I first met you, I talked about this sense of boredom but it was really standing at the window of my house and really knowing that I want nothing and that everything I have ever, I mean that I really had to make a big effort to try to get something because everybody else is getting something and I don't really know what the question is. It's more just I can't get it up to want something.

GANGAJI: Yes. It's very lucky.

PARTICIPANT: And it feels like I have to or it doesn't feel like I have to but something has to happen.

GANGAJI: The world tells you you have to. Advertisement tells you you have to. All your conditions says you have to. You have to get it up until your body is dead. Yes. What if you don't?

I remember once when I was practicing acupuncture in Mill Valley and I had accumulated, my husband and I had accumulated a very big nut in our house payments, it was like a two thousand dollar mortgage, some car payments and our habits and the fact that we were exhausted every day after work so we had to eat out every night and then of course when you eat out, you have to have some very nice wine and then you go to a movie and then you go home and do what else. And there was, I could feel, you know that I wasn't liking my work anymore, but it was good work, people seemed to be pleased with it. I was getting lots of ego-gratification from it and I had learned that when I started to kind of like keel over in the middle of the afternoon, I could just get a brownie and a latte and it was just, I could go some more. (Laughter) They are laughing because it is very familiar. (Someone from the audience: laughing because you...latte...brownie.)

There was one day in the office I had an acupuncture needle, and I was going to the table to put this acupuncture needle into someone, and I couldn't get to the table. Honestly, it was like reeling and I said, I put it down and I asked the person to leave, and I said, "I can't do any more." And I went home and I got in bed and I spoke to my husband, I said, "Sorry, I can't go to work. Please call the secretary and tell her I won't be in tomorrow. I'm going to take a day off." Wracked with guilt and fear that, my God, what will these people do without me? first of all. They need me. And then, what will I do without the money that I bring in. (Aside: I love seeing this recognition.) So a day passed and I couldn't go it. Then a week passed, I still couldn't go in. A month. I still couldn't get out of the bed. I could go to the bathroom, take a bath, go make some toast and honey and go back into bed. I couldn't budge. Then I would say, "Okay, I will get up tomorrow and I will just see two patients." I would start to get up and I would be flattened. I said to my husband, "I'm sorry, you know, I know we kind of count on my part of the money." But luckily, you see I was with someone who understood there was something more important than losing the whole show that we had set up. And he said, "Relax, it doesn't matter."

I'm telling you it took me almost two months to relax, to move from my bed out onto this little deck we had, and I recognized that for the first time in maybe a year, maybe longer, I heard birds sing. They had been singing the whole time. We had a beautiful place where birds were. I hadn't even heard the birds sing. I had been so fixated on what I should do and so transfixed that I was actually getting something from all the perks of selling my soul to doing this that I thought I should do.

So this is a very familiar story. Many of you know this. There was, at that point, you know it's funny because at that point, I started moving around more and I went out and had my hair cut and then a beauty parlour, I heard a manicurist say to one of her clients, "You know, spirit cannot enter until the being is still." And it hit me like an arrow. I said, "That's the truth!" That's the way, that's as much as I could understand, but I recognized it's the truth. What is

my life about? What is it I want? I liked this fancy car. I liked these beautiful clothes. I liked this good food. I liked this feeling like I am helping people. But what do I really want? And I had to see it had nothing to do with any of that, and that if I was not true to what I really wanted, there had to be enormous suffering. That if I had to sell my soul in the slightest, there was enormous suffering. So I had to say, "I stop. I give up. I have worked it out, I have visualized it. I have created it the way I thought it should be and in that I have sold my soul to the mind, to the power of the mind, to this great, for the power of the mind, for this great city and I want my soul back. My soul is my link to God."

So, you know, you can say, "Well you were lucky you had a husband who would feed you." I am saying you are lucky. You are lucky. The truth is you may lose everything. You may. Even this body. And the deeper truth is, you cannot lose anything. In your willingness to lose everything... Well, you be willing to lose everything and see. It's a lie, you know, that anything gives you fulfilling, deep, true joy. Joy is your nature. You stop chasing it in any thing, any person, any philosophy, you just give up and then see. It's your nature. It's your nature at rest. When you discover your nature at rest, you discover what is always at rest, at peace. Then it is quite interesting. Your life may externally duplicate exactly what you thought was the great obstacle in terms of working, being with people, doing. I never thought I would be helping people again. I couldn't consider that. But luckily, in my recognition that I can't help anybody and never could anyway, it was only some kind of sellout of my soul to some idea, I am quite free to participate in this play of giving and receiving help, to play it fully, all the way. Ironic, isn't it? Yes, it's a beautiful irony.

BARBARA: Even as we live very privileged lives, it is still possible to suffer enormously and maybe we suffer in a gilded cage. But I hope this podcast today supports you in telling the truth to yourself and simply being yourself. That's really why we're here.

I am glad we can offer you these recordings and if you would like to find out more about Gangaji or participate in our online gatherings or in-person retreats, just go to Gangaji.org, that's g-a-n-g-a-j-i dot o-r-g.

Thanks for listening and may we all listen to our own hearts. My name is Barbara Denempont. Until next time.